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REVIEW

contents

5 Edgar Morin: *The Case of James Dean*
13 Samuel Beckett: *Krapp's Last Tape*
25 Robert Creeley: *The Three Ladies*
27 H. D.: *Sagesse*
37 Karl Jaspers: *The Atom Bomb and the Future of Man*
58 Philip Whalen: *For C.*
60 John Rechy: *Mardi Gras*
71 Edward Field: *Poem for the Left Hand*
72 Jack Kerouac: *Essentials of Spontaneous Prose*
74 William Eastlake: *Portrait of an Artist with Twenty-six Horses*
86 Denise Levertov: *Scenes from the Life of the Peppertrees*
88 Charles Olson: *Human Universe*
103 Edward Dorn: *Vaquero*
104 Kenneth Koch: *Desire for Spring*
105 David Lyttle: *Lady Overboard*
107 Amos Tutuola: *The Animal that Died but his Eyes still Alive*
113 Roland Barthes: *Alain Robbe-Grillet*
127 Michael Rumaker: *Exit 3*
150 Antonin Artaud: *No More Masterpieces*
160 Clement Greenberg: *Letter on Pollock*

Cover photograph of James Dean by Sanford H. Roth (Rapho-Guillumette)

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Notes on Contributors:

ANTONIN ARTAUD, who died in 1948, is best known for his manifestoes calling for a total revolution in the theater, published as *The Theater and Its Double*, which includes "No More Masterpieces." ROLAND BARTHES' essay was first published in the French journal *Critique*. SAMUEL BECKETT'S *Krapp's Last Tape* is his most recent work; it is published here for the first time. ROBERT CREELEY, editor of *Black Mountain Review*, teaches in Alameda, New Mexico. H.D.'s sequence, "Sagesse," had its stimulus in the photograph of the owl which appeared in *The Listener* for May 9, 1957. EDWARD DORN, a graduate of Black Mountain College, lives in Burlington, Washington. WILLIAM EASTLAKE'S second novel will be published by Harcourt, Brace this fall. He lives on a ranch near Cuba, New Mexico. EDWARD FIELD, actor and poet, makes his home in New York City. KARL JASPERS' radio lecture, "The Atom Bomb and the Future of Man, has been widely broadcast in Germany. JACK KEROUAC'S "Essentials of Spontaneous Prose" is reprinted from *Black Mountain Review*. KENNETH KOCH is teaching at Brooklyn and Rutgers universities. DENISE LEVERTOV'S poem is reprinted from her volume *Overland to the Islands*. DAVID LYTTLE is a member of the faculty of West Virginia University. EDGAR MORIN'S essay is taken from his study of the movies, *The Stars*. CHARLES OLSON'S "Human Universe" is reprinted from *Origin*. JOHN RECHY, who lives in El Paso, is 24 years old; "Mardi Gras" is his first published story. MICHAEL RUMAKER'S "The Desert" appeared in the second issue of *Evergreen Review*. AMOS TUTUOLA, a native of Lagos, Nigeria, is the author of *The Palm-wine Drinkard*. We print here a chapter from his new book, *The Brave African Huntress*. PHILIP WHALEN is living in Newport, Oregon.

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EDGAR MORIN: The Case of James Dean

The mythological hero is always abducted from his parents or somehow separated from them: James Dean was an orphan. His mother died when he was nine and he was brought up by an uncle, a farmer in Fairmount.

The mythological hero must forge his own destiny in a struggle against the world. James Dean ran away from the university, and he worked as an ice-breaker on a refrigeration truck, a stevedore on a tugboat, a ship's boy on a yacht, until he assumed his place under the dazzling rays of our modern mythical sun: he appeared on the Broadway stage in *See the Jaguar*, then in *The Immoralist*. He went to Hollywood and made *East of Eden*.

The mythological hero undertakes many labors in which he proves his aptitudes and also expresses his aspiration toward the richest, most nearly total life possible. James Dean milked cows, tended chickens, drove a tractor, raised a bull, played star basketball, studied yoga and the clarinet, learned something about almost every field of knowledge, and finally became what in the modern world incarnates the myth of total life: a movie star. James Dean wanted to do everything, to try everything, to experience everything. "If I lived to be a hundred," he would say, "I still wouldn't have time to do everything I wanted to do."

The mythological hero aspires to the absolute, but cannot realize this absolute in a woman's love. James Dean would have had an unhappy life with Pier Angeli, who married Vic Damone: legend or reality? In any case, the legend is anchored in reality. In front of the church which Pier Angeli left as a bride, James Dean gunned his motorcycle: the noise of the motor drowned out the sound of bells. Then he dragged violently and drove all the way to Fairmount, the cradle of his childhood. (We rediscover here the theme of the amorous fail-

ure, necessary to heroic accomplishment, as well as the theme of the feminine maleficence which every redeeming hero encounters.)

The mythological hero confronts more and more touchingly the world he desires to seize in its entirety. James Dean's destiny became increasingly breathless: he was obsessed by Speed, the modern ersatz absolute. James Dean, seeming disturbed and feverish to some, extraordinarily serene to others, after finishing *Giant*, drove off into the night at 160 miles an hour in his racing Porsche towards Salinas, where he was to enter an automobile race.

The mythological hero encounters death in his quest for the absolute. His death signifies that he is broken by the hostile forces of the world, but at the same time, in this very defeat, he ultimately gains the absolute: immortality. James Dean dies; it is the beginning of his victory over death.

The "heroic" life and character of James Dean are not prefabricated by the star system, but are real, *revealed*. There is still more.

Heroes die young. Heroes are young. But our times have produced, in literature (Rimbaud, *The Wanderer*) and, decisively in recent years, in the cinema, heroes bearing the new message of adolescence. Since its origin, of course, the movies' greatest audience has been composed of adolescents. But it is only recently that adolescence has become conscious of itself as a particular age-class, opposing itself to other age-classes and defining its own imaginary range and cultural models. Which is as clearly revealed in the novels of Françoise Sagan and Françoise Mallet-Joris as in the films of Marlon Brando or James Dean.

James Dean is a model, but this model is itself the typical expression (both average and pure) of adolescence in general and of American adolescence in particular.

His face corresponds to a physiognomically dominant type, blond hair, regular features. Further, the mobility of his

expressions admirably translates the double nature of the adolescent face, still hesitating between childhood's melancholy and the mask of the adult. The photogenic quality of this face, even more than that of Marlon Brando, is rich with all the indetermination of an ageless age, alternating scowls with astonishment, disarmed candor and playfulness with sudden hardness, resolutions and rigors with collapse. Chin on chest, unexpectedly smiling, fluttering his eyelashes, mingling ostentation and reserve, naïve and gauche, i.e., always sincere, the face of James Dean is an ever changing landscape in which can be discerned the contradictions, uncertainties, and enthusiasms of the adolescent soul. It is understandable that this face should have become an insignia, that it is already imitated, especially in its most readily imitable features: hair and glance.

James Dean has also defined what one might call the panoply of adolescence, a wardrobe in which is expressed a whole attitude towards society: bluejeans, heavy sweater, leather jacket, no tie, an unbuttoned shirt, deliberate sloppiness are so many ostensible signs (having the value of political badges) of a resistance against the social conventions of a world of adults. Clothes are a quest for the signs of virility (the costume of manual laborers) and of artistic caprice. James Dean has invented nothing; he has canonized and codified an ensemble of sumptuary laws which allows an age-class to assert itself, and this age-class will assert itself even further in imitation of its hero.

James Dean, in his double life, both on and off the screen, is a pure hero of adolescence: he expresses his needs and his revolt in a single impulse which the French and English titles of one of his films express: *La Fureur de Vivre* (*A Rage to Live*) and *Rebel Without a Cause* are two aspects of the same virulent demand, in which a rebellious fury confronts a life without a cause.

Because he is a hero of adolescence James Dean expresses

with a clarity rare in American films, in *Rebel Without a Cause* and *East of Eden,* the rebellion against the family. The American film tends to mask parent-child conflicts, either in the familiar idyl (*The Hardy Family*) or else by altogether suppressing the parents' existence and transferring the father's image to an insensible, cruel, or ridiculous old man (half-senile judge or employer). *East of Eden* presents the characters of an uncomprehending father and a fallen mother; *Rebel Without a Cause* presents the characters of an uncomprehending mother and a fallen father. In both these films appears the theme of the adolescent's combat against the father (whether the latter is tyrannical or pitiful) and the theme of his impotence to relate meaningfully to his mother. In *Giant* the framework of the conflict explodes: it is against a family exterior to himself and, by extension, against all social norms that James Dean will do battle with such ferocious hatred.* But in all three of these films appears the common theme of the woman-sister who must be snatched from someone else's possession. In other words, the problem of sexual love is still enclosed within a sororal-maternal love, has not yet broken out of this shell to launch itself in a universe of pin-ups external to family and age-class alike. Upon these imaginary movie-loves is superimposed the love, itself also mythical perhaps, which Dean is supposed to have felt for Pier Angeli with her ingenuous, sister-madonna face. Beyond this impossible love begins the universe of sexual "adventures."

In another sense, James Dean expresses in his life and his films the needs of adolescent individuality which by asserting itself refuses to accept the norms of the soul-killing and specialized life that lie ahead. The demand for a total life, the quest for the absolute is every human individual's demand when he tears himelf from the nest of childhood and the chains of the family only to see before him the new chains

* George Stevens tells how it was James Dean himself who asked to interpret this role: "It's a part for me, Mr. Stevens."

and mutilations of social life. It is then that the most contradictory requirements come to a ferment. Truffaut expresses it perfectly (*Arts,* 26-9-56): "In James Dean, today's youth discovers itself. Less for the reasons usually advanced: violence, sadism, hysteria, pessimism, cruelty, and filth, than for others infinitely more simple and commonplace: modesty of feeling, continual fantasy-life, moral purity without relation to everyday morality but all the more rigorous, eternal adolescent love of tests and trials, intoxication, pride, and regret at feeling oneself "outside" society, refusal and desire to become integrated and, finally, acceptance—or refusal—of the world as it is."

The essential contradiction is the one that links the most intense aspiration to a total life with the greatest possibility of death. This contradiction is the problem of virile initiation, which is resolved in primitive societies by terrible institutionalized tests of endurance; in our society it is effected institutionally only by war (and vestigially by military service); lacking war or collective subversions (revolutions, underground resistance), this initiation must be sought in individual risk.

Finally, the adult of our middle-class bureaucratized society is the man who agrees to live only a little in order not to die a great deal. But the secret of adolescence is that living *means* risking death; that the rage to live *means* the impossibility of living. James Dean has lived this contradiction and authenticated it by his death.

These themes of adolescence appear with great clarity at a period when adolescence is particularly reduced to its own resources, when society allows it no outlets by which it can engage or even recognize its cause.

It is not by chance that a James Dean has been able to become an exemplary figure in these years of the half-century. To the fervent participations of the war and (in France) of

the Resistance, to the immense hopes of 1944-1946, have succeeded not only individualist withdrawals but a generalized nihilism which is a radical interrogation of all official ideologies and values. The ideological lie in which contemporary societies live, pretending to be harmonious, happy, and uplifting, provokes in return this "nihilism" or this "romanticism" in which adolescence both escapes and discovers the reality of life.

It is at this point in the Western middle-class world that adventure, risk, and death participate in the gunning of a motorcycle or a racing car: already the motorcyclists of *Orpheus* left death's fatal wake behind them. Already Laszlo Benedek's *The Wild One* traced bitterly and tenderly too the image of the adolescent motorcyclist. Marlon Brando, roaring archangel, like an imaginary John the Baptist heralded the real James Dean because he himself was the imaginary expression of thousands of real adolescents whose only expression of their rage to live as rebels without a cause was the motorcycle gang. Motorized *speed* is not only one of the modern signs of the quest for the absolute, but corresponds to the need for risk and self-affirmation in everyday life. Anyone behind a wheel feels like a god in the most biblical sense of the term, self-intoxicated, ready to strike the other drivers with thunderbolts, terrorize mortals (pedestrians), and hand down the law in the form of insults to all who do not recognize his *absolute priority*.

The automobile is escape at last: Rimbaud's sandals of the wind are replaced by James Dean's big racing Porsche. And the supreme escape is death just as the absolute is death, just as the supreme individuality is death. James Dean drives into the night toward the death from which the contract to make *Giant* could protect him only temporarily.

Death fulfills the destiny of every mythological hero by fulfilling his double nature: human and divine. It fulfills his profound humanity, which is to struggle heroically against

the world, to confront heroically a death which ultimately overwhelms him. At the same time, death fulfills the superhuman nature of the hero: it divinizes him by opening wide the gates of immortality. Only after his sacrifice, in which he expiates his human condition, does Jesus become a god.

Thus amplified in the character of James Dean are the phenomena of divinization which characterize but generally remain atrophied in the movie stars.

First of all, that spontaneous, naïve phenomenon: the refusal to believe in the hero's death. The death of Napoleon, Hitler, of every superman (good or evil) has been doubted and disbelieved because the faithful were never able to believe these heroes were entirely mortal. The death of James Dean has been similarly doubted. There is a legend that he miraculously survived his accident, that it was a hitch-hiker who was killed, that James Dean was disfigured, unrecognizable, perhaps unconscious: that he has been shut up somewhere in an insane asylum or a hospital. Every week 2,000 letters are mailed to a living James Dean. Living where? In a no man's land between life and death which the modern mind chooses to situate in insane asylums and sanitariums but which cannot be localized. Here James Dean offers himself to the spiritualist concept of death: James Dean is among us, invisible and present. Spiritualism revives the primitive notion according to which the dead, who are corporeal specters endowed with invisibility and ubiquity, live among the living. This is why one young girl cried out during a showing of *Giant*: "Come back, Jimmy, I love you! We're waiting for you!" It is the *living* (spiritualist) presence of James Dean which his fanatics will henceforth look for in his films. This is why spiritualist séances to communicate with James Dean have multiplied. This is why the little dime-store salesgirl, Joan Collins, took from the dictation of the dead James Dean the extraordinary spiritualist confession in which he declares, "I am not dead. Those who believe I am not dead are right,"

and in which he asserts he has rejoined his mother. This is why *James Dean Returns* by Joan Collins has sold more than 500,000 copies.

Thus a cult has been organized, like all cults, in order to re-establish contact between mortals and the immortal dead. James Dean's tomb is constantly covered with flowers and 3,000 people made a pilgrimage there on the first anniversary of his death. His death mask will be placed beside those of Beethoven, Thackeray, and Keats at Princeton University. His bust in plaster is on sale for $30. The fatal car has become a sacred object. For a quarter you can look at the big racing Porsche, for an additional quarter you can sit behind the wheel. This ruined car, which symbolizes the Passion of James Dean, his rage to live and his rage to die, has been dismembered: bolts and screws, bits of twisted metal, regarded as sacred relics, can be bought at prices starting at $20, according to size, and carried about like amulets to impregnate the wearer with the hero's mystic substance.

In death, by means of death, James Dean has recovered the forgotten prestige of the movie stars of the great epoch who, nearer gods than mortals, aroused hysterical adoration. But from another point of view his death authenticates a life which firmly fixes him among the modern stars, within the reach of mortals. The modern stars are models and examples, whereas the earlier ones were the ideals of a dream. James Dean is a real hero, but one who undergoes a divinization analogous to that of the great stars of the silent films.

And the immortality of James Dean is also his collective survival in a thousand mimetisms. James Dean is indeed a perfect star: god, hero, model. But this perfection, if it has only been able to fulfill itself by means of the star system, derives from the life and death of the real James Dean and from an exigence which is his own as well as that of a generation which sees itself in him, reflected and transfigured in twin mirrors: the screen and death.

—Translated by Richard Howard

SAMUEL BECKETT: Krapp's Last Tape

A late evening in the future.

Krapp's den.

Front centre a small table, the two drawers of which open towards audience.

Sitting at the table, facing front, i.e. across from the drawers, a wearish old man: Krapp.

Rusty black narrow trousers too short for him. Rusty black sleeveless waistcoat, four capacious pockets. Heavy silver watch and chain. Grimy white shirt open at neck, no collar. Surprising pair of dirty white boots, size ten at least, very narrow and pointed.

White face. Purple nose. Disordered grey hair. Unshaven.

Very near-sighted (but unspectacled). Hard of hearing.

Cracked voice. Distinctive intonation.

Laborious walk.

On the table a tape-recorder with microphone and a number of cardboard boxes containing reels of recorded tapes.

Table and immediately adjacent area in strong white light. Rest of stage in darkness.

Krapp remains a moment motionless, heaves a great sigh, looks at his watch, fumbles in his pockets, takes out an envelope, puts it back, fumbles, takes out a small bunch of keys, raises it to his eyes, chooses a key, gets up and moves to front of table. He stoops, unlocks first drawer, peers into it, feels about inside it, takes out a reel of tape, peers at it,

puts it back, locks drawer, unlocks second drawer, peers into it, feels about inside it, takes out a large banana, peers at it, locks drawer, puts keys back in his pocket. He turns, advances to edge of stage, halts, strokes banana, peels it, drops skin at his feet, puts end of banana in his mouth and remains motionless, staring vacuously before him. Finally he bites off the end, turns aside and begins pacing to and fro at edge of stage, in the light, i.e. not more than four or five paces either way, meditatively eating banana. He treads on skin, slips, nearly falls, recovers himself, stoops and peers at skin and finally pushes it, still stooping, with his foot over edge of stage into pit. He resumes his pacing, finishes banana, returns to table, sits down, remains a moment motionless, heaves a great sigh, takes keys from his pockets, raises them to his eyes, chooses key, gets up and moves to front of table, unlocks second drawer, takes out a second large banana, peers at it, locks drawer, puts back keys in his pocket, turns, advances to edge of stage, halts, strokes banana, peels it, tosses skin into pit, puts end of banana in his mouth and remains motionless, staring vacuously before him. Finally he has an idea, puts banana in his waistcoat pocket, the end emerging, and goes with all the speed he can muster backstage into darkness. Ten seconds. Loud pop of cork. Fifteen seconds. He comes back into light carrying an old ledger and sits down at table. He lays ledger on table, wipes his mouth, wipes his hands on the front of his waistcoat, brings them smartly together and rubs them.

KRAPP *(briskly).* Ah! *(He bends over ledger, turns the pages, finds the entry he wants, reads.)* Box . . . thrree . . . spool . . . five. *(He raises his head and stares front.*

With relish.) Spool! *(Pause.)* Spooool! *(Happy smile. Pause. He bends over table, starts peering and poking at the boxes.)* Box . . . thrree . . . thrree . . . four . . . two . . . *(with surprise)* nine! good God! . . . seven . . . ah! the little rascal! *(He takes up box, peers at it.)* Box thrree. *(He lays it on table, opens it and peers at spools inside.)* Spool . . . *(he peers at ledger)* . . . five . . . *(he peers at spools)* . . . five . . . five . . . ah! the little scoundrel! *(He takes out a spool, peers at it.)* Spool five. *(He lays it on table, closes box three, puts it back with the others, takes up the spool.)* Box thrree, spool five. *(He bends over the machine, looks up. With relish.)* Spooool! *(Happy smile. He bends, loads spool on machine, rubs his hands.)* Ah! *(He peers at ledger, reads entry at foot of page.)* Mother at rest at last . . . Hm . . . The black ball . . . *(He raises his head, stares blankly front. Puzzled.)* Black ball?. . . *(He peers again at ledger, reads.)* The dark nurse . . . *(He raises his head, broods, peers again at ledger, reads.)* Slight improvement in bowel condition . . . Hm . . . Memorable . . . what? *(He peers closer.)* Equinox, memorable equinox. *(He raises his head, stares blankly front. Puzzled.)* Memorable equinox?. . . *(Pause. He shrugs his shoulders, peers again at ledger, reads.)* Farewell to—*(he turns the page)*—love.

He raises his head, broods, bends over machine, switches on and assumes listening posture, i.e. leaning forward, elbows on table, hand cupping ear towards machine, face front.

TAPE *(strong voice, rather pompous, clearly Krapp's at a much earlier time).* Thirty-nine today, sound as a —*(Settling himself more comfortably he knocks one*

of the boxes off the table, curses, switches off, sweeps boxes and ledger violently to the ground, winds tape back to beginning, switches on, resumes posture.) Thirty-nine today, sound as a bell, apart from my old weakness, and intellectually I have now every reason to suspect at the . . . *(hesitates)* . . . crest of the wave—or thereabouts. Celebrated the awful occasion, as in recent years, quietly at the Winehouse. Not a soul. Sat before the fire with closed eyes, separating the grain from the husks. Jotted down a few notes, on the back of an envelope. Good to be back in my den, in my old rags. Have just eaten I regret to say three bananas and only with difficulty refrained from a fourth. Fatal things for a man with my condition. *(Vehemently.)* Cut 'em out! *(Pause.)* The new light above my table is a great improvement. With all this darkness round me I feel less alone. *(Pause.)* In a way. *(Pause.)* I love to get up and move about in it, then back here to . . . *(hesitates)* . . . me. *(Pause.)* Krapp.

Pause.

The grain, now what I wonder do I mean by that, I mean . . . *(hesitates)* . . . I suppose I mean those things worth having when all the dust has—when all *my* dust has settled. I close my eyes and try and imagine them.

Pause. Krapp closes his eyes briefly.

Extraordinary silence this evening, I strain my ears and do not hear a sound. Old Miss McGlome always sings at this hour. But not tonight. Songs of her girlhood, she says. Hard to think of her as a girl. Wonderful woman though. Connaught, I fancy. *(Pause.)* Shall I sing when I am her age, if I ever

am? No. *(Pause.)* Did I sing as a boy? No. *(Pause.)* Did I ever sing? No.

Pause.

Just been listening to an old year, passages at random. I did not check in the book, but it must be at least ten or twelve years ago. At that time I think I was still living on and off with Bianca in Kedar Street. Well out of that, Jesus yes! Hopeless business. *(Pause.)* Not much about her, apart from a tribute to her eyes. Very warm. I suddenly saw them again. *(Pause.)* Incomparable! *(Pause.)* Ah well . . . *(Pause.)* These old P.M.s are gruesome, but I often find them *—(Krapp switches off, broods, switches on)*—a help before embarking on a new . . . *(hesitates)* . . . retrospect. Hard to believe I was ever that young whelp. The voice! Jesus! And the aspirations! *(Brief laugh in which Krapp joins.)* And the resolutions! *(Brief laugh in which Krapp joins.)* To drink less, in particular. *(Brief laugh of Krapp alone.)* Statistics. Seventeen hundred hours, out of the preceding eight thousand odd, consumed on licensed premises alone. More than 20%, say 40% of his waking life. *(Pause.)* Plans for a less . . . *(hesitates)* . . . engrossing sexual life. Last illness of his father. Flagging pursuit of happiness. Unattainable laxation. Sneers at what he calls his youth and thanks to God that it's over. *(Pause.)* False ring there. *(Pause.)* Shadows of the opus . . . magnum. Closing with a *—(brief laugh)*—yelp to Providence. *(Prolonged laugh in which Krapp joins.)* What remains of all that misery? A girl in a shabby green coat, on a railway-station platform? No?

Pause.

When I look—

Krapp switches off, broods, looks at his watch, gets up, goes backstage into darkness. Ten seconds. Pop of cork. Ten seconds. Second cork. Ten seconds. Third cork. Ten seconds. Brief burst of quavering song.

KRAPP *(sings).* Now the day is over,
Night is drawing nigh-igh,
Shadows—

Fit of coughing. He comes back into light, sits down, wipes his mouth, switches on, resumes his listening posture.

TAPE —back on the year that is gone, with what I hope is perhaps a glint of the old eye to come, there is of course the house on the canal where mother lay a-dying, in the late autumn, after her long viduity *(Krapp gives a start)*, and the—*(Krapp switches off, winds back tape a little, bends his ear closer to machine, switches on)*—a-dying, after her long viduity, and the—

Krapp switches off, raises his head, stares blankly before him. His lips move in the syllables of "viduity." No sound. He gets up, goes backstage into darkness, comes back with an enormous dictionary, lays it on table, sits down and looks up the word.

KRAPP *(reading from dictionary).* State—or condition—of being—or remaining—a widow—or widower. *(Looks up. Puzzled.)* Being—or remaining? . . . *(Pause. He peers again at dictionary. Reading.)* "Deep weeds of viduity" . . . Also of an animal, especially a bird . . . the vidua or weaver-bird . . .

Black plumage of male . . . *(He looks up. With relish.)* The vidua-bird!

Pause. He closes dictionary, switches on, resumes listening posture.

TAPE —bench by the weir from where I could see her window. There I sat, in the biting wind, wishing she were gone. *(Pause.)* Hardly a soul, just a few regulars, nursemaids, infants, old men, dogs. I got to know them quite well—oh by appearance of course I mean! One dark young beauty I recollect particularly, all white and starch, incomparable bosom, with a big black hooded perambulator, most funereal thing. Whenever I looked in her direction she had her eyes on me. And yet when I was bold enough to speak to her—not having been introduced—she threatened to call a policeman. As if I had designs on her virtue! *(Laugh. Pause.)* The face she had! The eyes! Like . . . *(hesitates)* . . . chrysolite! *(Pause.)* Ah well . . . *(Pause.)* I was there when *—(Krapp switches off, broods, switches on again)—* the blind went down, one of those dirty brown roller affairs, throwing a ball for a little white dog, as chance would have it. I happened to look up and there it was. All over and done with, at last. I sat on for a few moments with the ball in my hand and the dog yelping and pawing at me. *(Pause.)* Moments. Her moments, my moments. *(Pause.)* The dog's moments. *(Pause.)* In the end I held it out to him and he took it in his mouth, gently, gently. A small, old, black, hard, solid rubber ball. *(Pause.)* I shall feel it, in my hand, until my dying day. *(Pause.)* I might have kept it. *(Pause.)* But I gave it to the dog.

Pause.

Ah well . . .

Pause.

Spiritually a year of profound gloom and indigence until that memorable night in March, at the end of the jetty, in the howling wind, never to be forgotten, when suddenly I saw the whole thing. The vision, at last. This I fancy is what I have chiefly to record this evening, against the day when my work will be done and perhaps no place left in my memory, warm or cold, for the miracle that . . . *(hesitates)* . . . for the fire that set it alight. What I suddenly saw then was this, that the belief I had been going on all my life, namely—*(Krapp switches off impatiently, winds tape forward, switches on again)*—great granite rocks the foam flying up in the light of the lighthouse and the wind-gauge spinning like a propellor, clear to me at last that the dark I have always struggled to keep under is in reality my most—*(Krapp curses, switches off, winds tape forward, switches on again)*—unshatterable association until my dissolution of storm and night with the light of the understanding and the fire—*(Krapp curses louder, switches off, winds tape forward, switches on again)*—my face in her breasts and my hand on her. We lay there without moving. But under us all moved, and moved us, gently, up and down, and from side to side.

Pause.

Past midnight. Never knew such silence. The earth might be uninhabited.

Pause.

Here I end—

Krapp switches off, winds tape back, switches on again.

—upper lake, with the punt, bathed off the bank, then pushed out into the stream and drifted. She lay stretched out on the floorboards with her hands under her head and her eyes closed. Sun blazing down, bit of a breeze, water nice and lively. I noticed a scratch on her thigh and asked her how she came by it. Picking gooseberries, she said. I said again I thought it was hopeless and no good going on, and she agreed, without opening her eyes. *(Pause.)* I asked her to look at me and after a few moments —*(pause)*—after a few moments she did, but the eyes just slits, because of the glare. I bent over her to get them in the shadow and they opened. *(Pause. Low.)* Let me in. *(Pause.)* We drifted in among the flags and stuck. The way they went down, sighing, before the stem! *(Pause.)* I lay down across her with my face in her breasts and my hand on her. We lay there without moving. But under us all moved, and moved us, gently, up and down, and from side to side.

Pause.

Past midnight. Never knew—

Krapp switches off, broods. Finally he fumbles in his pockets, encounters the banana, takes it out, peers at it, puts it back, fumbles, brings out the envelope, fumbles, puts back envelope, looks at his watch, gets up and goes backstage into darkness. Ten seconds. Sound of bottle against glass, then brief siphon. Ten seconds. Bottle against glass alone. Ten seconds. He comes back a little unsteadily into light, goes to front of table, takes out keys, raises them to his eyes, chooses key, unlocks first drawer,

peers into it, feels about inside, takes out reel, peers at it, locks drawer, puts keys back in his pocket, goes and sits down, takes reel off machine, lays it on dictionary, loads virgin reel on machine, takes envelope from his pocket, consults back of it, lays it on table, switches on, clears his throat and begins to record.

KRAPP Just been listening to that stupid bastard I took myself for thirty years ago, hard to believe I was ever as bad as that. Thank God that's all done with anyway. *(Pause.)* The eyes she had! *(Broods, realizes he is recording silence, switches off, broods. Finally.)* Everything there, everything, all the—*(Realizes this is not being recorded, switches on.)* Everything there, everything on this old muckball, all the light and dark and famine and feasting of . . . *(hesitates)* . . . the ages! *(In a shout.)* Yes! *(Pause.)* Let that go! Jesus! Take his mind off his homework! Jesus! *(Pause. Weary.)* Ah well, maybe he was right. *(Pause.)* Maybe he was right. *(Broods. Realizes. Switches off. Consults envelope.)* Pah! *(Crumples it and throws it away. Broods. Switches on.)* Nothing to say, not a squeak. What's a year now? The sour cud and the iron stool. *(Pause.)* Revelled in the word spool. *(With relish.)* Spooool! Happiest moment of the past half million. *(Pause.)* Seventeen copies sold, of which eleven at trade price to free circulating libraries beyond the seas. Getting known. *(Pause.)* One pound six and something, eight I have little doubt. *(Pause.)* Crawled out once or twice, before the summer was cold. Sat shivering in the park, drowned in dreams and burning to be gone. Not a soul. *(Pause.)* Last fancies. *(Vehemently.)* Keep 'em under! *(Pause.)* Scalded the eyes out of me reading *Effie* again, a page a day, with tears again. Effie . . .

(Pause.) Could have been happy with her, up there on the Baltic, and the pines, and the dunes. *(Pause.)* Could I? *(Pause.)* And she? *(Pause.)* Pah! *(Pause.)* Fanny came in a couple of times. Bony old ghost of a whore. Couldn't do much, but I suppose better than a kick in the crutch. The last time wasn't so bad. How do you manage it, she said, at your age? I told her I'd been saving up for her all my life. *(Pause.)* Went to Vespers once, like when I was in short trousers. *(Pause. Sings.)*

Now the day is over,
Night is drawing nigh-igh,
Shadows—*(coughing, then almost inaudible)*—of the evening
Steal across the sky.

(Gasping.) Went to sleep and fell off the pew. *(Pause.)* Sometimes wondered in the night if a last effort mightn't—*(Pause.)* Ah finish your booze now and get to your bed. Go on with this drivel in the morning. Or leave it at that. *(Pause.)* Leave it at that. *(Pause.)* Lie propped up in the dark—and wander. Be again in the dingle on a Christmas Eve, gathering holly, the red-berried. *(Pause.)* Be again on Croghan on a Sunday morning, in the haze, with the bitch, stop and listen to the bells. *(Pause.)* And so on. *(Pause.)* Be again, be again. *(Pause.)* All that old misery. *(Pause.)* Once wasn't enough for you. *(Pause.)* Lie down across her.

Long pause. He suddenly bends over machine, switches off, wrenches off tape, throws it away, puts on the other, winds it forward to the passage he wants, switches on, listens staring front.

TAPE —gooseberries, she said. I said again I thought it was hopeless and no good going on, and she agreed,

without opening her eyes. *(Pause.)* I asked her to look at me and after a few moments—*(pause)*—after a few moments she did, but the eyes just slits, because of the glare. I bent over her to get them in the shadow and they opened. *(Pause. Low.)* Let me in. *(Pause.)* We drifted in among the flags and stuck. The way they went down, sighing, before the stem! *(Pause.)* I lay down across her with my face in her breasts and my hand on her. We lay there without moving. But under us all moved, and moved us, gently, up and down, and from side to side.

Pause. Krapp's lips move. No sound.

Past midnight. Never knew such silence. The earth might be uninhabited.

Pause.

Here I end this reel. Box—*(pause)*—three, spool—*(pause)*—five. *(Pause.)* Perhaps my best years are gone. When there was a chance of happiness. But I wouldn't want them back. Not with the fire in me now. No, I wouldn't want them back.

Krapp motionless staring before him. The tape runs on in silence.

CURTAIN

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ROBERT CREELEY: The Three Ladies

I dreamt. I saw three ladies in a tree,
and the one that I saw most clearly
showed her favors unto me,
and I saw up her leg above the knee!

But when the time for love was come,
and of readiness I had made myself,
upon my head and shoulders
dropped the other two like an unquiet dew.

What were these two but the one?
I saw in their faces, I heard in their words,
wonder of wonders! it was the undoing of me
they came down to see!

Sister, they said to her who upon my lap
sat complacent, expectant:
He is dead in his head, and we
have errands, have errands . . .

Oh song of wistful night! Light shows
where it stops nobody knows, and two
are one, and three, to me—and to look
is not to read the book.

Oh one, two, three! Oh one, two, three!
Three old ladies sat in a tree.

A white-faced Scops owl from Sierra Leone, West Africa.

A white-faced Scops owl from Sierra Leone, West Africa.

H. D.: Sagesse

I

You look at me, a hut or cage contains
your fantasy, your frantic stare;

"a white-faced Scops owl from Sierra Leone,
West Africa," I read, under a picture in *The Listener*,

and this Whitsun, June the ninth, and I must find
the Angel or the Power that rules this hour;

I find the name *Aneb*, with the attribute,
Dieu clément for the hour, and for the day,

Dieu propice with the name Siré;
Viroaso is the angel for the day, and for the hour,

we may invoke the angel, *Thopitus*;
do these rebuke me? what can I do, my friend?

I can only say, "O white-faced Scops,
stare out, glare out, live on . . ."

II

May those who file before you feel
something of what you are—that God is kept within

the narrow confines of a cage, a pen;
they will laugh and linger and some child may shudder,

touched by the majesty, the lifted wings,
the white mask and the eyes that seem to see,

like God, everything and like God, see nothing;
our small impertinence, our little worth

is invisible in the day; when darkness comes,
you will be no more a fool, a clown,

a white-faced Scops, a captive and in prison,
but noble and priest and soldier, scribe and king

will hail you, sacrosanct, while frail women
bend and sway between the temple pillars,

till the torches flicker and fail,
and there is only faint light from the braziers

and the ghostly trail of incense, and cries of recognition
and of gladness in the fragrant air.

III

"O, look, he's comical, his baggy trousers
and his spindly legs—you've still got half a bun";

"he won't eat buns," the father says,
"but mice and such, look at his claws,

a vampire—yes, he's comical, look at his nose
and whiskers—proper make-up for a Guy";

the child remembers something, draws away,
she thinks, "I never saw a farthing,

it's half a ha'pence, but she said, teacher or somebody
or Mr. Spence, that there were two, not owls,

some other birds, sold for a farthing—and what else?
He said, *without your Father, no bird falls,*

I don't know where or what it's all about;
I wish I could go home, get out of here;

He must be angry if he liked the birds;
I wish they wouldn't laugh, it isn't funny,

and this one's bigger than—than a hundred others,
sparrows, I think it was.

IV

An owl hooted out in the darkness,
so the angel came—what angel and what name?

is it Tara, *Dieu fontaine de sagesse*
and the angel Ptébiou? it was his hour

or near his hour, what did he say?
a caller before noon, had spoken of owls here,

"*Uhu*," she said, "great owl, *Waldkauz*, the wood-owl,"
and she translated *Kauz* as a queer fellow;

I showed the picture and she said, "how beautiful";
how strange, how wonderful, that last night

was the first night that it came,
the distant summons, the muted cry, the call,

and my bones melted and my heart was flame,
and all I wished was freedom and to follow

the voice, not very far, not very near,
a voice that changed our lake, the *Zürisee*,

into a mystery, the haunted mere of *Märchen*
and old legends, or even Lethe or Eunoë, now and here.

V

Without your Father, without your father—
what does that mean? my father's talking to the gardener

or the man who sweeps the papers—"yes, they're pretty, mum,
the deers"—does it mean animals? does He run, too

on little hooves like that one, does he jump
and stand (now) like that biggest one with horns,

straight up against the wire? he's looking over;
I wish I'd kept my half-bun,

not crumbed it for the pelicans—birds, too?
I'd like to feel his tongue upon my hand;

that boy is frightened—"let me help"—"he'll bite—"
"you can't reach up"—"O yes, O yes, I can,

he's looking at us"—"stand on the keeper's box,
he's busy talking"—"but, but, you take it,

it's your piece of bun—" "no fear, you're welcome, miss—
but your dad's come"—my father? my father?

but this deer is my father—"a funny kid,
it's my fault, mister"—"now, you hop down"—

"yes, yes, I'm coming"—but I'm somewhere else,
He kissed my hand, we're somewhere in the forest . . .

I never thanked the boy, was he God, too—

VI

Goot—Goed—*Dieu qui reçoit les pécheurs*
and *Dieu qui rejouit,* the angel, Ptéchout

and the angel, Aterchinis, and Sister Annie brings my coffee,
and I say, "how are you?" and she says, "gut—gut";

Goot and Goed, Scotch and Belgium, my book says,
Goot, gut and good and surely God, and so we play

this game of affirmations and of angels' names,
this Sunday, one week after Whitsun;

though I can not say Ptéchout and I must look again
to see if Aterchinis is spelt right, Goot, Goed seems easy

and the way direct; "gut—gut," I'll say and Goot will surely
answer;
God who receives sinners? what are we?

and Goed is "gut," actually same say "goed" here,
some of the simple people, they are sinless,

we have known the desperate day of Cain,
none of us blameless, but a proud angel says,

"I serve Him who receives the outcast," and another says,
"I bring happiness and serve God who rejoices."

VII

And there is Good, just good, *anglaise*,
la droite de Dieu, Syth is the angel;

And where are we now? seven weeks after Whitsun,
since to-day is August 4th; the owl-day was June 9th,

and Good, just good, is June the 21st, degree 22,
and the other days for Good, are April 10,

September 1, November 12, January 23,
so we find round the year-dial, each God-attribute

five times, each flame, each angel's name
that corresponds again to hours and minutes;

but it is simple, Good, anyone can understand,
Good—*anglaise*—not anyone, it is profound and subtle,

for my room is fragrant with enchantment,
with the flowers he left, and I am taken far away

by Goth, Gott, *Germain*,
the Sun, *Dieu admirable*.

VIII

He went away, Goth, the German, *Germain*,
degrees, days, hours, minutes,

how many? he left the flowers, August the 3rd;
this October 17th and they say,

he comes back in three days—will he?
who will come back? a wandering flame,

a name, Goth, Gott, *Dieu admirable*, or another?
what Sun will rise, what darkness will unclose?

what spark, diastole, compel, repel?
what counter-appeal contract the heart?

or not, what mystery? shall the winter-branch
be broken, fuel for another? or shall the branch,

prouder than spring, lordlier than summer,
strike deeper and grow higher to disclose

the last enchantment,
the white winter-rose?

IX

Germain said, "isn't it over-weighted?
can you have so many angels' names,

a list of dates, months, days,
a prose in-set? or is it poetry? Egypt,

hieratic rhythm, then the most ordinary association,"
but I said, "isn't that the whole point, anyway?"

what am I doing? am I swept into a cycle
of majestic Spirits, myself aspiring yet questioning

my right to mention even one of the seventy-two regents
of the great Temple of the *Œdipus Ægyptiacus*?

am I, in some way, culpable? or does the magnetic sway
of the vast cycle require this space, this place,

this corner of this room, to prove the might
of the infinitely great to protect

the most minute, the almost invisible spark, from the extraneous chaos,
the impenetrable outer gloom?

x

Or is it a great tide that covers the rock-pool
so that it and the rock are indistinguishable

from the sea-self and are part of the sea-floor,
though the sea-anemone may quiver apprehensively

and the dried weed uncurl painfully
and the salt-sediment rebel, "I was salt,

a substance, concentrated, self-contained,
am I to be dissolved and lost?"

"it is fearful, I was a mirror, and individual,"
cries the shallow rock-pool, "now infinity

claims me; I am everything? but nothing";
peace, salt, you were never as useful as all that,

peace, flower, you are one of a thousand-thousand others,
peace, shallow pool, be lost.

KARL JASPERS:

The Atom Bomb and the Future of Man

1. THE PRESENT SITUATION

New destructive weapons have always been denounced as criminal when they first appeared. At one time cannon, and more recently the submarine—during World War I. But their existence came to be accepted soon enough. However, the atom bomb (hydrogen bomb, cobalt bomb) is a fundamentally new development. It confronts mankind with the possibility of its own total destruction.

Only experts understand the technical details, but each of us grasps the fact that America and Russia (and England, lagging a bit behind) have mobilized enormous resources to increase their stores of such bombs and to intensify their destructive power. The bomb dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, was the first (160,000 dead; three days later the second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki). Before such destructive power, Japan capitulated. But these first bombs, frightening as they were, are insignificant beside the bombs that have since then been dropped experimentally in desert areas, and that develop more than 600 times the energy developed by the Hiroshima bomb. Even then the world, despite its horror, was not truly aroused until it learned that the extent and kind of destruction of life eluded exact calculation. We are told that survivors exposed to radioactive air, waste away for years before they finally die. We are told quite flatly by the experts that it is possible today to destroy all life on earth by human action. Whether the already existing bombs, if they were all dropped within a short time, would suffice to contaminate the atmosphere with radioactivity to such an extent that all life would cease, has not been disclosed.

The great physicists whose brains have brought about this

new situation have told us how things stand. Einstein, in 1955, shortly before his death, joined with others in signing an appeal which contains the following sentence: "In the event of massive use of hydrogen weapons, we must expect sudden death for some fraction of mankind, along with painful diseases and the final destruction of all living creatures."

Such is the disquieting situation today, with respect to the future of mankind, which is threatened as never before. Before this there had only been unrealistic ideas about the end of the world. Expectation of an impending end of the world was the morally and religiously effective error which John the Baptist, Jesus, and the early Christians communicated to their contemporaries. But now we are confronted with the real possibility of such an end—if not the end of the world, or even of our planet, at least of human life.

2. WHAT IS POLITICALLY DESIRABLE?

All thinking people desire the abolition of atomic weapons. All states declare themselves willing. But abolition is trustworthy only if mutual control is instituted at the same time.

Another line of thought is: Even if atom bombs are not abolished, no one will dare to use them. Even Hitler, despite his mass production of poison gas, did not resort to it, not even when he was faced with disaster. When a weapon must inevitably destroy both warring factions, it has become unusable.

A third line of thought is: Because atomic war is impossible, all war has become impossible. In a world war waged over the meaning of the political order, at the price of life or death, resort to the atom bomb must intervene at some point, and therefore no great power will dare to start a war. Since it would be a war of annihilation to all parties, it cannot occur. Total danger brings about total salvation. The extremity of the predicament imposes a form of political existence which, with the atom bomb, makes war as such impossible.

We are really very lucky. The era of wars is behind us. We ought now to cope with the new and quite different serious problems that arise out of the elimination of war.

3. THE ACTUAL SITUATION

Because mutual control is not agreed upon, atom bombs continue to be produced.

And despite the atom bomb we still have wars. Measured by the standard of a world war these wars are local, to be sure; but they are fearfully destructive nevertheless. Instead of saying: There will be no wars because there are atom bombs, we should rather say: There can be wars today *with* atom bombs. Should the small states enjoy the terrible privilege of waging war? They commit violent actions in order to alter their status. They threaten small adversaries in order to impose their will by brute force, according to the age-old formula. They threaten the great powers with the danger of another world war. This danger acts as a deterrent. When the small states break treaties, the great powers do not dare to enforce respect for law by violent means. But this privilege of the small sovereign states is possible only because the great powers do not agree among themselves as to how the law and the treaties are to be defended. Rather, they exploit the actions of the small states to extend or consolidate their own positions of power. Thus, the threat of the atom bomb becomes part of the old policy of blackmail, cunning, and deceit. It is said that a good policy consists in carrying things to the brink of war without actually getting into war. Propagandistic appeals are made to moral motives, and a mass of evasive arguments serves to conceal the naked will to power which is proclaimed no longer to exist. In short, there is no desire to use the atom bomb, but it is kept ready as a threat. Hence the curious result: the more powerful the states are thanks to the bomb, the more they appear paralyzed for the time being, while the small states indulge in acts of violence.

What are the further prospects? The great powers strive to make peace between the small warring states, but not without ulterior motives. They take sides, and are almost always opposed to each other. In this way they remain exposed to the danger of a world war, while the small states fight among themselves under their partial protection. Since the idea of a common order is absent, all this amounts merely to postponement of world conflict. Because each little war is actually a disguised war between the great powers, each implies the danger of a world war.

4. THE CRUCIAL POINT: INTERNATIONAL CONTROL

Salvation seems close at hand. Since all states are willing to renounce the atom bomb, it should be sufficient for the three powers possessing the bomb to conclude a treaty and carry out its provisions. All existing bombs would be destroyed, and new ones would no longer be produced. But so far Russia has refused to agree to mutual control, without which there would be no guarantee that such a treaty would actually be carried out.

This would save the day. But international control would at once entail consequences going beyond elimination of the atomic threat. For international control would inevitably be associated with world-wide political change, namely, the transition from a state of affairs in which the nations confront one another like beasts in a jungle, to a community of nations based upon law, whose observance is secured by common institutions. It would mean the transition from a state of mere coexistence which an act of violence can change into war at any moment, to a state of co-operation in which the freedom of all would depend on effective international agreements. This would be the beginning of world peace.

The first consequence of such control would be that the powers would gain insight into all aspects of all situations, which must of itself lead to mutual frankness, and finally to

the collective spirit indispensable for peace. The second consequence of control would be the voluntary restriction of state sovereignty by treaties, whose enactment, as with all laws, must not be based on trust alone, but on effective controlling agency. Such an agency would be set up by the contracting parties themselves. Only in this way can the freedom arbitrarily to violate treaties be eliminated.

The setting up of such a mutual international control would mark the first and probably crucial step toward a situation in which the atom bomb could, with relative certainty, be ruled out. For the atom bomb can be abolished with certainty only if war as such is made impossible.

5. POLITICAL PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE

World peace would be based on the following principles:

(1) Treaties are recognized as legally binding, unless they are changed by new negotiations. Even in the event of profound differences of opinion, the verdict of legal agencies is to be accepted. But just as a state cannot abolish its police force, so the peaceful international order cannot renounce all use of force. How to constitute an international police force under the control of the supreme legal authorities, is one great problem.

(2) The supremacy of law requires renunciation of absolute sovereignty. This implies that the decisions of the appointed officials would be determined by a majority of votes and that the right to veto would be renounced. Instead, it should be possible, after a lapse of time, to submit every verdict of the juridical authorities to review, new negotiation, and eventual revision. The setting up of supranational officials appointed by the states and endowed with such unprecedented great powers, is the second great problem.

(3) The actual conclusion of peace implies unrestricted exchange of news reports, and the free and public confrontation of ideas, without any censorship in either instance. The

achievement of a change for the better requires world-wide publicity. This does not present any special difficulty.

(4) The nations will be concerned with each other's internal affairs. Injustice must be condemned by the whole world. Reparation of internal wrongs—for instance, when human rights are violated—would be made possible through the international courts.

(5) Unjust political divisions and treaties, originating in the past, would be subject to revision. Subjugated nations are to be freed, if they so desire, by an international agency. Free and secret ballots are the means for ascertaining the people's will.

6. THESE PRINCIPLES ARE IN EFFECT REPUDIATED TODAY

The formulation of these principles has always aroused skeptical smiles. However, since the majority of mankind wants peace even political leaders today proclaim principles of peace. But these are the exact opposite of the principles of a really peaceful world order. We are told that the following principles are and must forever remain untouchable: the absolute sovereignty of individual nations, and hence the principle of noninterference in internal affairs, and the right to veto in international bodies; equality of all nations with regard to their right to arbitrary acts; peaceful coexistence of mutually exclusive political and social forms, which are mutually exclusive because they are based on totally different basic constitutions, with prohibition of free communication by means of iron curtains; finally, there is even complete renunciation of violence on the ground that force must not be resisted by force.

Let us take a closer look at these principles.

Absolute sovereignty and noninterference must be recognized today as at best necessary evils, because they prevent the inevitable abuse of interference and, thus, postpone war. They would be intolerable in a truly peaceful world order.

For, by legal standards, the claims of absolute sovereignty and noninterference are identical with the claim to be entitled to commit wrongs. They imply readiness to violate treaties and to wage war whenever resort to such means is possible and profitable. The right to exercise a veto within the institutions that make decisions makes it impossible to subject the nations to a supranational legal principle. Noninterference prevents the spirit of legality from developing on an international basis. Just as every citizen of one state must feel personally wronged by any injustice done another citizen elsewhere in it, so every state must regard every wrong done to a citizen of another state as a wrong done to itself. Neither a state nor a community of states can subsist if the citizens are indifferent toward wrongs done to others. Those states which exercise terroristic violence against their subjects thereby violate their internal peaceful order, and threaten the peace of the world as well, because they are always ready to extend such violence over all mankind. Equality of rights makes peace impossible if it implies equal rights to act arbitrarily. Those who reject mutual control, who permit no free exchange of news and ban the free public discussion of all questions in their own states, and who do not tolerate the struggle among parties for decision by free elections, prove that they strive to assert themselves unconditionally, although they cannot show this openly without danger to themselves.

7. THE BREATHING SPACE

So long as the plan for a treaty abolishing the atom bomb and establishing international control has not moved forward, so long as the way to a world order has not actually been embarked upon, we face extreme alternatives: it seems that our present situation must lead either to a world order or to a world war and the probable destruction of mankind.

All that political leaders are doing for peace today is nothing but trying to gain time. Such efforts have always

produced respites—valuable breathing spaces—in the continual advance of evil. Today, more is at stake. If the present respite, merely one respite in the march toward ever threatening war, does not become definitive, mankind is probably doomed, and history as we conceive of it at an end.

8. WHAT DOES THE PUBLIC THINK?

Let us see what is going on in the realm of public opinion and expression.

The behavior of the scientists reveals helplessness. Einstein, who induced Roosevelt to produce the atom bomb from fear that Hitler and the German physicists might produce it first, warned the world after the war that it was doomed if it continued to follow along this path. But once the intelligence of scientists and technologists has been set in motion, and enormous resources placed at their disposal, a well-intentioned warning can scarcely change anything. As skilled workers the scientists have become instruments of the state power, which strives always to possess the most destructive instruments in order to be superior to its enemies. Some scientists have scruples of conscience; they hesitate; but most remain imprisoned in the technical tasks set before them. Unmindful of the whole, they do what they are asked. There is a gulf between the ingenuity of their technological work and the naïveté of their political thinking. Frightened by the mischief they have already brought about, they demand peace as a solution, while going right ahead with their labors. These highly intelligent men both do and do not want it; they behave like children, and then bemoan the tragedy.

Everywhere people are protesting. Proposals are advanced that the bomb as such be declared criminal. But just as societies of pacifists have not in the least contributed to the prevention of war, all efforts to condemn the atom bomb merely as such, without realizing its function within the actual

behavior of nations and the obvious motives of most people, are vain and dangerous. For they do not go to the root of human evil; they do not go beyond the symptoms. Because they divert attention from the essentials they contribute to their obfuscation; nothing can be achieved by indignation and appeals. Behind this façade of opinions and emotions, whether the protestors are pacifists or not, they preserve the way of life, the kind of thinking, which taken as the ground of human reality, produces just such terrors in consequence. Adjurations based upon indignation and anxiety are essentially as untrue in this connection as in any other, serving merely to veil the actuality of life. But reality is ignorant of such meaningless opinions. For self-complacency is opposed by "the truth allied to reality" (Hegel). This means: For truth to be effective one must not deal with symptoms, but go to the roots, to the origin of the evil.

Finally, there are those who prefer to close their eyes to the danger. They say that no policy, no plans are possible under the threat of total disaster. We want to live, not to die: should the disaster come to pass, it will be the end of everything. It is pointless to think about it.

What a deliberately blind outlook, what a stultifying policy this is! To push aside possibility in this fashion offends the dignity of reason. A man who is himself wants to know what is knowable. Ineluctably, we stand today in the shadow of great disaster. To treat a real possibility, one that has by no means been fully explored, as if it would disappear were we to exclude it from consciousness, is to behave like the ostrich. Continually to keep that catastrophe before one's eyes as a possibility—indeed, as a probability—is today the only hope for reflection, for political renewal, for averting the catastrophe.

It would be pleasant to think: This catastrophe can never be; if it were possible, every government and every church

would be proclaiming this fact daily. While it is true that every man must die, that nations too must pass, and that history records the irresistible destruction of the most magnificent things it has produced, yet mankind itself, the soil of life from which new life has always sprung, will not be destroyed. We should like to think that things won't be so bad as that; surely, somehow a way will be found to remove the threat of destruction.

But arguing against all such reassurances is the fundamental experience of life, of which every older man is aware today: the seemingly impossible has come true several times in his lifetime. We were sure that certain things were impossible, or that they would come to pass only in some remote future which would not affect us. But we have ourselves witnessed these things: the First World War with its consequence that Europe ceased to be the center of the world; National Socialism with its murder of six million Jews. In the nineteen twenties, when we first heard about atomic energy, it was as pure theory. We felt that such extraordinary insights were most interesting for their bearing upon our notions of matter; they seemed to have no practical significance. Today they are reality.

To those who draw comfort from the feeling that the catastrophe is impossible because it would be monstrous—extraordinary in the absolute sense of the term—because it lies so far beyond the bounds of our habitual thinking, it is necessary to point out in all seriousness: Why should it be impossible for mankind to be destroyed, and destroyed quite soon? After all it is no more extraordinary than the fact that man produces cosmic energy, the very energy of the sun—here on earth by releasing it from the earth's matter.

The survival of man depends on our response, by our thoughts and deeds, to the real possibility. The situation creates a responsibility of which we can become aware only if we are completely sincere.

9. THE IDEAL OF A MORAL AND POLITICAL CONVERSION

The foregoing considerations have been political: Inasmuch as mankind refuses to perish, the states will have to accept restrictions on their sovereign powers. What took place within limited areas when the original states were founded, must take place again: a voluntary association of states must be formed. The possibility of extreme disaster, which superior intelligence has brought about, is to be eliminated by a technique of institutional arrangements for the effective enforcement of treaties. If this could be done, mankind would not have to change. Intelligently devised institutions would, by the common will of all, prevent any individual from making malevolent use of man's fundamental impulses—his drive to violent acts, his pleasure in violence and recklessness, his drive to sacrifice himself in the pursuit of violence, to risk his life in conquest, his drive to go on and on to ever greater adventures, to escape the shallowness of actual existence. Under collective rule these impulses would have to be gratified in ways that do not imperil the whole of mankind.

But all this has not been achieved so far. Political considerations tending toward such a goal are certainly the right ones. We must never give up trying to follow that path—the only practicable one; here planning is possible, and perhaps we can make some headway. But it is not enough. We have to ask whether treaties and institutions suffice to get rid of evil. May they not, rather, develop into sham entities, behind which each state will simply go on strengthening its own power positions, preparing for the worst?

In the meantime, tremendous resources and the best minds available today are being used to increase the numbers and the effectiveness of atom bombs, to make total death more possible. The eventuality draws closer day by day and year by year. It was the Second World War that enabled this to come to pass. Such enormous sums of money would not have been spent on anything so problematical of accomplishment,

so totally unprofitable over a long stretch of time; in America it was fear of Hitler that set the thing in motion. What keeps it going is that war is still possible. It will stop only when war itself becomes impossible—war, which has existed as long as mankind, and the end of which seems impossible precisely because human nature is what it is.

Malice and stupidity, hitherto limited in their consequences, are today dragging all mankind to its destruction. Unless we henceforward live all for one and each for all, we shall perish together. This unprecedented situation requires a response to scale.

The response was given long ago. It looks beyond politics, and it has often been repeated since the prophets of the Old Testament first daringly uttered it and passed it on to all future ages. Because it has so often been repeated in vain, sometimes seriously and sometimes unseriously over the centuries, many have become weary of it. Now, however, we must face the extraordinary challenge of an extraordinary situation urgently imposed: we must transform our outlook and our ways of thinking, our moral-political will.

An idea that has long been present in individuals, but has so far remained powerless, has become the condition of the survival of mankind. I believe I am not exaggerating. Those who go on living just as they lived before have not grasped the danger. Merely to conceive it intellectually does not mean that it has been absorbed into the reality of one's life. Without a change of heart the life of mankind is lost forever. To survive, man must change. If he thinks only of the moment, everything will come to an end, almost certainly, the day the atom war breaks out.

So long as the political forces do not reach far enough, no real change of motivations can be claimed. Man remains what he has always been: the same violence, ruthlessness, reckless bellicosity; the same love of ease and refusal to see clearly; the same need for repose and improvidence in those

who enjoy security, who are always outwitted by the bold go-getters; the same shameless blackmailing and the same submissiveness to it; the same hiding of all behind legal arguments and a merely fictitious authority, which some despise in secret, and others regard as insuring their comfort, but which all join in throwing overboard at the moment of crisis.

We should cease taking life as a great adventure that ends in death, thus enhancing the attractiveness of the extraordinary, and stimulating the will to power and domination. And we should cease living in passivity, voicing our complaints and accusations from the sidelines.

The work of building, of shaping the environment, of attaining, for the present generation and for posterity, life's fulfillment in peaceful competition, in contemplation of the beautiful, and in thinking truth, ought not to be hindered by the disastrous race to destroy life's accomplishments. The situation in which the criminal acts of a small minority can be applauded by the multitude, which only too soon—but still too late—finds itself under the rule of terror, exploited and enslaved, must come to an end.

The change can only be brought about by each and every man in his own conduct of life: first within himself, and then in the realization that he is not alone. Every tiniest deed, every smallest word, every nuance of behavior among the millions and billions who are alive, is important. What takes place on the large and public scale is merely a symptom of that which is done in private by the many. Every action by every statesman must be judged by its fidelity to the spirit that alone can assure the survival of mankind. The statesman who makes a highly moral appeal at the conference table and then behaves disloyally at home, shares in the responsibility for the continuation of the evil he warns against. If in his official capacity he displays tolerance for the human and all-too-human, while careless in the conduct of his own life, he undermines the spirit of the whole upon which we all count. The man who

strives to bring about the miracle of a moral transformation in all mankind and yet contributes with his whole intelligence to the essentially thoughtless continuation of the existing state of affairs—perhaps by recourse to statements that have become empty the better to veil the truth—that man casts suspicion on morality itself.

When everything that can be projected in thought moves into the political arena, something will surely happen that cannot be foreseen. At this point the question, What are we to do? can no longer be answered by directions as to how it is to be done: the question can only be answered by an appeal to slumbering possibilities. Conversion is not enforceable. All we can do is to point to realities and make articulate the voices that for centuries have been calling for a change of heart. All that men can know of the possibilities of the future should be incorporated in the curricula of our schools. Whether the individual will be affected thereby is a matter we must leave to the freedom of the young. Once the fundamental facts of our political existence today are made clear, and the consequences of the various modes of possible behavior have been developed, the answer is up to each individual, not as a matter of opinion, but in the full context of his life.

10. POLITICAL AND MORAL CONSIDERATIONS ARE INSUFFICIENT

Politically, it has become clear that only world peace can remove the threat of the atom bomb. To imagine that it will eventually be possible to wage wars without recourse to the atom bomb, to use it merely as a deterrent, is a delusion.

However, since a state of world peace can scarcely be realized by political means alone, this idea inevitably arose: Man seems doomed unless he experiences an inner change through his freedom. But such a conversion cannot be the object of a new politics: it can only be the prerequisite of a new politics.

Thus, although the political solution appears meaningful, it will be futile unless it is supplemented by something more. But the moral solution does not lie within the scope of our planning. Hence it appears unreal to the political realist. The realist points to the nature of man as it has always been and always will be. He is absolutely pessimistic regarding the long range prospects (which can quickly become short range). He shapes his policies for the moment only. The moralist, on the other hand, basing his thought upon the idea of a future regeneration of mankind, raises unfulfillable demands. Because his thought goes beyond the present reality, he is not listened to.

We must continue our questioning. Is there anything that goes beyond both realism and moralism and endows both with effectiveness? Both realism and moralism are superficially correct; this correctness becomes truth only if they are guided by something that is subordinate to neither. Left to themselves, realism is solely concerned with the present moment —the attitude of wait and see—and idealism merely condemns events in the name of its demands. In this way both prove that they do not dare to face extreme possibilities.

Political and moralistic thinking has forgotten the meaning of risking one's life, of dying, of sacrifice. The task of politics is to make life secure. This task demands sacrifices. But it leaves unanswered the question as to what sacrifice and death mean in themselves. For they can never be adequately justified in worldly terms.

The something without which both realism and moralism ring hollow eludes precise formulation. The question bearing on it is answered by the religious doctrines and the so-called beliefs or convictions that serve as substitutes for religion and are put forward as though taken for granted in public expression. The realists operate with the idea of an inevitable course of history (whether they conceive of it along Hegelian, Marxist, Spenglerian, or other lines). The moralists assume

that in the end justice and truth will triumph (even though they continually commit unacknowledged violations of both justice and truth). Such fundamental beliefs, crystallized into conventions, produce an atmosphere of unreasoned confidence. But the fact that such confidence exists at all is evidence that we must look beyond realistic politics and idealistic morality to the other thing, the ground of all. Our theme, the atom bomb, leads us to this limit by way of the question most disquieting to our conscience: if man's action can result in the total destruction of mankind is it absolutely evil? Has the venture of life a limit? Ought we to renounce the atom bomb, even before we have achieved world peace, to renounce it unconditionally, before there is international control of the production of atomic energy? Is it possible that we must return to the spirit of Einstein's decision when, under the threat of Hitler's totalitarian domination of the world, he advised in favor of producing the atom bomb? Is it possible that the decision taken at that time was at bottom taken in unawareness of the consequences, and that it faces us again in a new, more conscious form?

11. A POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE

This question cannot be answered by an analysis of possible events, but only in the conscience of him who will act or fail to act at the moment of crisis. It is this: Can there be a situation which might justify the use of the atom bomb for political or moral reasons?

In effect, the answer to this question is given today only too clearly: namely, that in given circumstances the bomb will be used. For the production of atom bombs is not condemned unconditionally, but only on the condition of mutual control. Moreover, it would be a mistake to think that we are dealing with a mere threat or with threats that cancel each other out. A threat that is not meant seriously is not a threat.

Should we endorse this actual answer, or should we condemn the atom bomb as such, unilaterally, even in the absence of controls, on the ground that it signifies, not just war, but the destruction of mankind?

Before going further we must characterize the political situation. Within the shadow of the atom bomb the danger grows that the totalitarian powers will rob the world of freedom. In a war waged with masses of men and the old weapons, with all technological resources short of the atom bomb, the totalitarian powers would be victorious today. In such a war, therefore, events would reach a point where the free states would be faced with the question: Are we to use the atom bomb or to accept totalitarianism? To risk the destruction of mankind or to give up our freedom? In view of our failure to outlaw the atom bomb by means of mutual control, protection of the free world by means of the old weapons would mean the continual sacrifice of the population in the form of military training and preparations for war. In view of the further failure to organize a politically reliable union of the free states, the moment can very well come, probably very suddenly, when to use or not to use the atom bomb will have to be decided by whatever men are then in power through the ordinary conditions and mechanisms of political ascension. It will then be too late for anything else.

To be sure, everyone agrees that the atom bomb must be abolished. But there is no agreement on this rarely discussed question: What are we to do when the life or death of freedom is at stake? If the atom bomb were resorted to very often, it would probably—though not certainly—destroy all life. However, loss of freedom as a result of a totalitarian victory would make life not worth living—although we cannot be sure that this would be for all time to come. The atom bomb's threat to all life would thus be matched by the totalitarian threat to all freedom. A time of momentous decision may come—no one can make it in advance. But discussion of the problem

of conscience it involves is meaningful, if we are not to be caught unawares. Thought in anticipation of future possibilities may influence the ultimate decision. At least we can learn what is at stake. Deceptively reassuring ideas may be unmasked. The extreme situation is disclosed in all its rigor, is shown to be unresolvable by finite thinking. Such a disclosure may influence even the present policies.

12. IS THERE STILL HOPE?

At this point we are once again confronted with the question of what constitutes the common ground of politics and morality and makes them meaningful? The question being unanswerable in terms of finite thinking, how is it possible to conceive of a course of action in which we can have confidence?

Every variety of false hope must be done away with. We have had it in all its guises, time and again. We Germans saw that the lawful order of a free life could be destroyed overnight because the forces of resistance were far too insignificant. In the situation that arose suddenly our political leaders acted thoughtlessly. They did not know what was actually going on, they missed the essentials. Diverted by secondary issues, which were exaggerated out of all proportion, they allowed themselves to be driven by the dark forces and capitulated to them. The peace that we once knew for years on end—before 1914, and before 1933—twice proved deceptive. Is the cycle to be forever repeated?

Do we even grasp what was necessity in our irresistible fall into the abyss? Certain factors in our hopeless headlong plunge were clear to us long ago, as well as the opposite possibilities of a magnificent forward development toward a richer life.

The rational man refuses to recognize such factors as inevitable. Schematic views which threaten or reassure need not necessarily fetter us; they may underline the fact that our

future partly depends on ourselves, even though we cannot know how our deeds affect the larger course of events.

This is the appeal to our reason, but reason in all its range and depth, which includes good will. This reason is the only and ultimate thing on which we can base ourselves.

Therefore we must forego every variety of hope that diverts us from this crucial recognition:

For instance, can we hope to find a technological escape from the technological evil on the general grounds that each new danger automatically creates new means of escape? Can we hope to escape into outer space? Can we gain a foothold on some as yet uninhabited planet? No, such fantasies reflect the arrogance of technological overconfidence. Even if such extremely improbable possibilities should one day come true, they are more remote than the imminent threat of atomic destruction.

Or can we have confidence in spontaneous, unforeseen, quasi-magical, sudden changes in the history of mankind, of life on earth, of the universe? In salvation by the intervention of the transcendent at the moment of catastrophe? No, for even if some such thing were possible, our expectation of it could not be made a motive for action; it would be madness.

Or does it make sense to expect new prophets to appear, divine revelations to be given, to raise the moral energy of mankind to a higher level? No, even if such events were possible on the basis of abstract intellectual analogies, they are nevertheless inconceivable to us. To entertain false expectations of such events would be very dangerous. For we cannot act meaningfully in expectation of the unintelligible. Such an expectation would make us prisoners of our own deception, and as a result we would throw away such opportunities as are actually open to us.

Today, defense against total evil depends solely on our real actions, on our present reason. We can act and plan responsibly only on the basis of known data and guided by

rational ideals. To be rational we must have confidence in human reason. Are we justified in trusting it? If this confidence may be put in question by our awareness of how irrational we often are, by the predominance of unreason and anti-reason in the majority of men, experience also teaches us how reason is awakened and how it can grow. While we cannot rely safely on mankind's rational responses, nevertheless everything good occurs in the confidence that rational men do respond to reason.

But what if this confidence, too, fails? We cannot accept the final defeat of reason by the superior strength of anti-reason. To be sure, human existence will in some very remote time probably come to an end as a result of cosmic processes. But today men themselves can bring about that end by their own unreason. This leads us to the question: What do we think of such a possibility? What form does hope take, when even confidence in reason is shaken?

Total destruction was often mentioned by the ancient prophets. The "day of Yahweh" will come when everything will be destroyed. The early Christians spoke of an impending end of the world. Today, such perspectives have once again become unavoidable, this time in consequence of technological developments. Except for those who live thoughtlessly from day to day, they must once again become the central preoccupation of our life.

Even though we cannot safely rely on reason in men, is there nonetheless some basis left for confidence? When despair says: Nothing avails—let us not think about it—let us live for the present—what lies in store for us is death in any case —is this really the last word, is there really nothing left after that? No, was Jeremiah's reply to his despairing disciple Baruch, when the state and the nation and even the religion of the Jews, become worshipers of Isis, lay in ruins: "The Lord saith thus; Behold, that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up. . . . And

seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh." What Jeremiah meant was: that God is is enough.

This, and this only, is the ultimate horizon, in the perspective of which everything falls into its right place. It is here that courage grows out of confidence in the ultimate ground of Being, which no worldly shipwreck can destroy, not even the shipwreck of reason. Then wings are given to the will, our will to achieve, to venture, to see purpose in the process of building within human existence so long as human existence lasts, even if we do not know how long our achievements will endure.

Reason teaches us that it is not courageous to pass judgments on the final end and the inevitable decline. It is only courageous to do that which is possible, in knowledge and nonknowledge, and never to give up hope as long as one lives.

Nor is it a courageous philosophy, but rather a petrifying one, to look on at the allegedly certain decline until it swallows one up. It takes courage to be shaken to one's depths, and to learn what the extreme situation reveals.

To us it is left to regard the splendor of the world, to love men, to keep hold of the present so long as it is granted us. In our love for one another we become aware of our origin and of eternity. Here is the ground and assurance of our hope, which will enable us to live in our world by reason, not merely by finite understanding, but by reason in the broadest sense of the word, and to direct our thoughts, impulses, efforts, beginning with our own everyday life, toward averting the final disaster that threatens.

For if we, if everyone, if some of us, not only now and again, but with our whole lives, come to reason; if this reason, once kindled among some of us, spreads like a purifying flame —only then may we hope to overcome the threatening total disaster.

—Translated by Norbert Guterman

PHILIP WHALEN: For C.

I wanted to bring you this Jap iris
Orchid-white with yellow blazons
But I couldn't face carrying it down the street
Afraid everyone would laugh
And now they're dying of my cowardice.

Abstract beauty in the garden,
In my hand, in the street it is a sign
A whole procession of ithyphallic satyrs
Through a town whose people like to believe:
"I was made like Jesus, out of Love; my daddy was a spook."

The upright flower would scare them. "What's shot,"
They think, "from the big flesh cannon will decay."
Not being there I can't say that being born is a chance
To learn, to love and to save each other from ourselves:
Live ignorance rots us worse than any grave.

And lacking the courage to tell you, "I'm here,
Such as I am; I need you and you need me"
Planning to give you this flower instead—
Intending it to mean "This is really I, tall, slender,
Perfectly formed"—is uglier than their holy fantasies,

Worse to look at than my own gross shape.
After all this fuss about flowers I walked out,
Just to walk, not going to see you (I had nothing to bring—
This poem wasn't finished, didn't say
What was on my mind; I'd given up)

I saw bushes of crimson rhododendron, sparkling wet,
Beside the hospital walk—I had to see you.
If you were out, I'd leave these flowers.
Even if I couldn't write or speak
At least I broke and stole that branch with love.

"Frankly, I have but little confidence in those who pose as refined connoisseurs and passionate admirers of the great pontiffs of art—honored by several stars in the guidebooks or by a portrait, usually quite unrecognizable, in illustrated encyclopedias—but who know nothing of the art of their own times. Should any consideration at all be given to those who go into raptures over great names but whose attitude, when confronted with contemporary works, is one of bored indifference, or the display of a marked preference for the mediocre and the commonplace?"—Igor Stravinsky, *An Autobiography*

JOHN RECHY: Mardi Gras

Do you realize that a year ago in December I left New York and came to El Paso and went to Los Angeles and Pershing Square, then went to San Diego and La Jolla in the sun and returned to Los Angeles and went to Laguna Beach to a bar on the sand and San Francisco and came back to Los Angeles and went back to the Orange Gate and returned to Los Angeles and Pershing Square and went to El Paso and the sleepy alligators and stopped in Phoenix one night and went back to Pershing Square and on to San Francisco, again, and Monterey and the shadow of James Dean because of the movie, and Carmel where there's a house like a bird, and back to Los Angeles and on to El Paso where I was born, then Dallas with Culture, and Houston with A Million Population—and on to New Orleans where the world collapsed, and back, now, to El Paso grasping for God knows what?

And it seems (is it strange?) that I havent breathed all that time, that I was holding my breath—or had been, until Mardi Gras in New Orleans, when I was smashed in the stomach and forced not really to breathe but to explode, and once having been smashed and consequently having exploded, that now, in a way, Im dead, as dead as a corny balloon (I'll try for crazy by saying a corny *green* balloon) —because the ugliest things are still the corniest—punctured and shriveling up dead.

Because now that The Carnival is over (the clown on the float suddenly became an angel throwing me a silver star, and I jumped to catch it but someone else did too, and the cheap necklace the clown-angel had thrown spilled on Canal Street all pink and blue pieces of glass, my silver star), I can hardly sleep, and if I do I'll wake up and have to face myself in the mirror and that terrifies me because the mirror

will stare at me, and I'll look for someone I knew (ages 15 to 20), and I wont see who I want to see. (Granted that this person never really existed, he existed for me until a few years ago, and I could fool others into believing he did exist (and some think still he does), and then he existed for me that much more.)

And when I do get up, now, the day will stand before me at attention like a private waiting to be told what to do, sir.

But all this is now, in El Paso. And I want to tell you about The Carnival.

From El Paso I went to New Orleans, riding on a sea of faces in an army of cars, and in the French Quarter I didnt sleep it seemed for days and days. Suddenly I would walk into the street, maybe from where supposedly I had been sleeping, and there was the sun. Or I would walk from somewhere else (and there was the sun) where a taxi took me with the kid in front bleeding where theyd hit him with a stick, and two others saying, "The dirty bastards, we're going to come back, the four of us—for sure," calling me Tony, which isnt my name, and asking was I with them and would we or wouldnt we kill the sons of bitches that had hit our buddy with a stick, while his back was turned, although our buddy—whom we had just met, the way we had met each other hustling the same queen (none of us made it that night)—had done nothing but flashed a mean switchblade on the other guy, ripping his hand at the thumb and the finger so that it opened like the webbed foot of a duck. Whether, as I said, I had been in someone's pad or that night in the taxi, or in a bar, where Chi-Chi the queen from Los Angeles dozed nightly perched like a blond owl on the bar—inevitably someone would open whatever door there was, and there was the sun pouncing on us like a hungry wild animal on food, and the door closed quickly.

It meant a day had gone by. But what good is a day going by so easily when, suddenly, there is the sun and another

day, another stretch of time before you can hide again? It's better to wake up nights so you dont have to screw your eyes up and your dark self adjusting to the sun. So in the light I tried to sleep but couldnt make it, and it began again trying to fill the nothing with something which this time was goddamnit this.

The kid said, "See, you go and tell him—over there, see (and, man, that cat is loaded!)—that Sandy Lee wants to see him, and when he comes outside you come with him and shove him toward the stairs and me and my buddy'll grab his ass, and if he dont fork nice, we'll take it and break the bread in three." The man was drunk and I said, "Sandy Lee, outside, she wants to talk to you," and he got up and looked through the open door of the bar past Angel Face making love to the mike and into the courtyard leading to Sandy Lee's bar where his/her orange earring dangled for the tourists, and started to come with me and saw the two cats moving out and looked at me and sighed and understood and said, "You run along yourself, son, and you tell Sandy Lee I will see her later, hear?"

And the two cats outside prowled waiting, but he didnt show, thank God.

The boy-girls were bitchy to each other more than usual that night (the Vice had made them cut their hair, they looked so much like women—and that's against the law) over which queen would have which man at her pad that night, in case of didnt score, and I, and Us, we loved it, myself because, Christ, what the hell, and Sonny because he'd been run out of Miami for no visible legal means, and Jocko because the circus folded and where else is there a trapeze? —and who gives a damn anyway? Betti (who was Ben in Nebraska) said I was her new husband, and this pissed Vicki and Salli (Daniel and Bob in Atlanta) who grabbed Sonny and Jocko and said, "Well, honey, these are *our* husbands," almost at the same time in almost the same words and ac-

cents. Theyre sisters. And myself and the two other "husbands" felt ourselves so goddamned masculine, because to be desired by a queen—well, queens always say they want MEN. . . . And we kept on digging Pepper the most beautiful queen in the Quarter who looks like Kim Novak, trying to think we wished he was a she, because we dig real girls only —for love.

One day I took pill after pill someone handed out, and then heaven-puffs and spinach, and then beer and then whiskey and then subversive vodka even and then something very strange that looked like a raisin (and was, plus), and the queen camping on Toulouse Street said, "Nothing like it, honey, wait and see." But, still dead sober, dead conscious, nothing could put me to sleep, and I saw Miss Bobbie and Whorina waving at me across the street asking did I have a place to stay?

They had short hair.

I stopped pretending once on St Peter not far from the Cathedral's bells next to the alley where the woman wanted to draw me for free because all the other portraitmakers were occupied at $2, $5, and $7 a head and she felt so lonesome and unwanted—stopped pretending as we walked along the hovering old houses that lead into the ugly courtyards and ugly dank places they call enchanting in the folders and on the tours but that only a horror movie could do justice, and into the house of the two lovers from New York and into bed with them in the middle. (Do they still go to bed in two's?) "Im going to surprise you," I said. "Im not dumb at all, like I look, like I try to look, and act, like you think I am, like you want me to be—or tough, really. That's just so I can make it. But what the hell. Im smart. Listen, I can quote Rimbaud. *'Jadis si je me souviens bien, ma vie etait un festin. . . .'* And Verlaine. 'It rains in the street, as it rains in my heart. . . .' In French and English, see! And Nietzsche and Christ and Shakespeare and Desdemona and Drusilla

Drake," who are two queens in the Quarter, "and I wrote a novel when I was 18 and I dig music, and I even have heard of painting, my favorite being Modigliani's because of the eyes, man, the cool crazy hipsters' eyes." And guess what?

They loved me!

But guess what?

They lost Interest in me. I knew it. (On Sutton Place overlooking the East River I saw a copy of Colette and looked through it, and the man said, "Get out of here, you read, I dont want you anymore, really masculine men dont read!" and he gave me a couple of bucks.) Because to play this, youve got to be dumb, and if you aint dumb, dad, you aint from nowhere cause that means you aint Mas-Cu-Line, and they dont dig and your bread is coming from Never. . . .

Although my wallet was loaded now (I had made it with the cat from New York who thought it was so sad but loved it when I told him I dug girls), I had to steal as badly as some guys need to shoot their load sometimes—for nothing better to do, the way old women knit. The jaded middle-aged man from Houston in the tawdry pink Cadillac with the jaded younger man with the face like a blubbery mask —rather, like a fish if a fish was a man—and the tall lank dancer just as jaded, said, "Join us for breakfast?" but we went straight to the motel, and I had expected money, but no one said anything so I decided to use this for my excuse —because I still need excuses, Im that new.

We drank and drank, and do you know that liquor only makes me more sober, more lucid? I had been sober all that time.

Me and those three, and they dug it weird. "Hurt me, baby, please hurt me," begged the pink Cadillac. "And me, too!" said fishface caressing my belt. "Please," murmured the lank, "please, be *mean*. . . ." Then all three were exhausted. Out. I went through fishface's pockets first, and he had $50.00, more, and I took only half—then the others, and I

took just half. Then I slept on the floor because I didnt want to be near them and woke up, and woke them, in the afternoon. Then! Laughing, smiling, being happy, they rode me into town through the blazing sun and the knowledge of myself, with the stolen money cozy in the pocket of my levis.

I went to the Y and over it all General Lee stood surveying Lee Circle, arms crossed, disapproving, and I thought he must still be looking at me through the window of the Y as the hot-water steam mushroomed about me, protecting.

Every day, religiously, I wrote my mother, in Spanish. *Mi querida* mommie. It's been snowing here in New Orleans for the first time in 27 years, I told her.

The snow covered the cemetery in back of the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe, which is my mother's name, and everyone, even Us, looked pink and real in the white light. And if it had snowed more, it might have killed some of the cockroaches. For one day this rotten city was purified.

Someone even threw a snowball!

The snow melted, it rained, and there was slush. The sun came out. . . .

From St Charles the parade (The Parade) passed in front of the Mayor, who drank champagne, standing on a platform with a Negro in white gloves while the King of the parade smashed the wine glass into the street and the people screamed with joy as the floats passed opening and closing giant mechanical eyes insanely and the girls with rosy legs twirled their nervous batons and the Air Force marched by in military style playing a march and feeling much a part of something —The Parade, in military style. The crowds were staggering as if the door, the only door, to a snakepit had suddenly been opened, and I read that one man shot another over some beads. The parade passes by and the men in masks throw beads—necklaces and bracelets and one-inch elephants and Japanese parasols and whistles and the people jump up

and get them, and since this was Mardi Gras Day, the day before no more parades, well, if you hadnt gotten a bracelet or a necklace you were frantic. (This was when my angel who was really a clown threw me a star which was really a pink and blue necklace sprinkling glass on the street.) The Negroes dressed in torn tunics over their pants jazzed it with flaming sticks crazily to an inside rhythm—they must have, because the only music I could hear was the white band playing Dixie and the southunn laaadddiiiies and genelmens in southunn voices saying, "Aint that gorjus, all them coluhs?" and, "Yall come rought on back," to the stray children, "this instant, heuh?"

Later, along Royal, the redwigged woman in the tight candystriped skirt leaned toward the half-naked blond Indian covered with rouge and whispered, "Screw me please, dear," where the cats hung on Jackson Square re-emptying their empty Hurricane glasses watching the tourists anxious to wait anxiously in line to have coffee and donuts at the Market before cruising Royal Street (Roo Rowyall) for gay antiques and pralines that are clean, where the stuffed black-mammy was punctured in the breast revealing very white cotton innards which would have insulted many a southunn laaaaddddy, you believe it, not caring that the plainclothes had said if I was still in town theyd have me for novisible-legalmeansofsupport, while around me in this sea of colors drowning the plainclothes, Marie Antoinette and Robin Hood were chased into the Cathedral by a band of cannibals that later caught on fire and got their picture in the paper ignoring Tarzana posing for the newsreel camera with her scarlet-painted nails, while dejectedly (the saddest single sight I saw) at Pirate's Alley, Scarlett OHara, her skirt high up revealing hairy man's legs, wailed to no one, "Tara *burned*! And I ain't got the money to pay the *taxes*!" And another phony Indian, much more cunning and much more naked, danced outside the Bourbon House while cameras clicked,

flashed and rolled until the fat bald man whispered in the Indian's ear, would he consider giving a private performance?

At the Masquerade in the afternoon, the man in the ballet tights said to me, "You dare me?" And I did. And he went down. "I dare you again," I said. And he went down again. And they all started saying, "*I* dare you!" "I dare you, *too*!" Then to each other, "I dare *you*!" And the Masquerade had quite a bash, not caring that down Bourbon Sally Rand, who "made three World's Fairs famous" ("Well, how old *is* she?" said Salli as we passed the sign), was making quite a breeze, creating quite a storm (to go all the way), and Alouette twirled her giant breasts like windmills—but then what's the difference when Patti Waggin must have been doing the same somewhere on Main Street in way far-off Los Angeles?—which was nothing compared to what happened at Dixie's although Fat Herself moved chaperonely nervously sighing, "Please, boys, be *nice*."

Then, *smash*!

Smash! *Smash*! *Smash*!

It burst, erupted, exploded, *what I cant tell you,* and I folded up at Walter's on Toulouse and wailed, broken up, and cried and cried and nearly fell. Suddenly, I was dead-drunk, worth all those days and nights of sober, because it had smashed, the world caved in—and it had happened, what I cant tell you, although it's the real subject of all this —it had happened with a single knowing smile as I sat with the $10-john (for 15 minutes, he dug me that much). It happened with that smile and Jerry's "Oh babe, I'll just have to tell you later." Later came. I broke up laughing, myself. "But, wait," I said, "you dont know the half of it," and because he, and then they, wouldnt understand the truth, the truth, the truth, because for them to feel the immensity of it for me, I had to extend the years of terror. Because you know but they didnt that the terror of ten lifetimes can be contained in a single moment, and although

this moment was years long, still it was necessary to extend it. And even so, did they understand? Well, how can I know? Well, some, I think, did. The world whirled and I vomited, and someone came to the head where I was folded over. "Are you my friend?" "Why else would I be here?" Yes, he was my friend, but goddamnit at that time I wanted to smash someone else, out there, someone who had been preferred over the image in the mirror, ages 15 to 20, of the me that had never existed really, that had stared for hours, not knowing he really didnt exist—preferred over me, and I was just as lonesome and ugly As You Please.

Dont let anyone tell you it doesnt happen like this except in phony stories, because it happens in life, dad-o, exactly like Im going to tell you—happened to me exactly like this, *exactly*, it happened like this—

Suddenly, in one moment, just like Im saying now, IN ONE SINGLE SOLITARY CRAZY ONE-UNIT MOMENT, I was sober. And more than before. As if I had been two people and one had gotten drunk, thank God, but the other, now, the sober one, could look on, and it's terrifying when the sober you sees the drunk you so ugly, beaten and scared, sitting next to Jocko at the Poor Boys saying himself, "I hate this god-damned city, too—Im heading for Miami tomorrow" ("Where the Vice'll bug you till you shag," said the sandy-haired boy), sitting with the mean-looking little girl hovering behind the counter like a vulture who, that night before the cab, said to my buddy of just a few moments, "Man, if you ever come around, I'll get you with my blade, and, man, dont think like I cant use it!" and the fat man making sandwiches with his hairy hands out of the long phallic bread like they use in the Village and North Beach and in all the other endless places where they have Poor Boys.

Out on the street—miracle of miracles!—for the first time, it was still dark.

The first church I phoned was St Patrick's, because there's

one in El Paso where I used to go to Confession. "I cant see you," said the priest, "not until 8, we are closed now." "Like a drugstore?" He hung up. I called St Louis Cathedral because that is so big. "I cant see you—of course not—I get these calls all the time." A third one—youd think I would have given up. "Dont hang up, Father, Im in trouble, Im desperate," and he hung up. And I called the Church of Eternal Succor thinking they meant it, and the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe because Im Mexican, because my mother's name is Guadalupe, and they all said, "No." "Go to sleep," so we can. "Come tomorrow," to the Confessional. "Sometime else." "When we are open." One even said, "God bless you," before he hung up.

And I was thinking that although there is no God, never was a God, and quite possibly never will be One, it is possible to understand Him—or that part of Him that had forbidden tasting Knowledge, because, Christ! at that moment I longed for innocence more than anything else, and I would have given away all the frantic knowing for a return to Grace, which is only the state of, idiot-like, Not Knowing.

I called the last church listed in the yellow pages of the New Orleans Telephone Directory under Catholic (if I had one now I would look it up, but I will certainly go to the Telephone Company to find it), and a young priest answered who is Italian, and he didnt hang up and he was whom I had tried to reach and I was glad the others had hung up who couldnt have understood anyway, and he spoke to me because I said to him, "All I want is for you to say something to me —but I dont know what." Because what had really happened after I ran out of the Poor Boys was this. I tried to go to sleep at the Avenue Theater where they show three movies till five in the morning, but I felt something on my arm, which was three well-fed cockroaches, and something on my thigh, which was the man next to me's hungry hot hand, and in the head the gaunt-faced men and boys—theyre gaunt even

when theyre fat—stood pretending to be smoking, licking their lips—but I couldnt sleep, because when I closed my eyes, the recurrent nightmare I had had as a very little boy came again that I was being crushed by WOODEN stones, over which, or between which, or among which, there was a thin, thin draping like cheesecloth, and each time I closed my eyes, it was there, and I tried to push it, or them, away. But when I opened my eyes the stones and cheesecloth were gone but the cockroaches were there all over the wall and me. (We had giant brown cockroaches at home, and when we left, in the afternoon, sometimes, in the hot fierce Texas summer, and returned at night, turning on the light, they flew at us—they had wings almost two inches wide—from all directions, making funny noises as they crashed like miniature planes against the wall—splut!) So I spoke to the real priest and I told him what I cant tell you and he talked to me and talked, and finally it was light again, this time thank God.

I left New Orleans that morning.

And I came to El Paso my hometown.

But it's windy here now. The clouds storm angrily across the sky rushing at each other like to battle. You know how it is in Texas every year before spring. One moment the painful awareness that soon spring is coming, with the yellow-green clusters of leaves budding on the trees—and the next moment the fierce wind with the needlepointed dust whirling and howling.

And the fierce wind is an echo of angry childhood and of a very scared boy looking out the window seeing my fat dog Winnie, dead, outside by the house, and the gray Texas dust gradually covering her up—and thinking, It isnt fair! WHY CANT DOGS GO TO HEAVEN????

EDWARD FIELD: Poem for the Left Hand

Cancer strikes and I lose my left hand:
My whole life has to be reorganized
Since I can no longer earn my living as a typist.
I am now one of the obviously crippled
Although to tell the truth
I have been one of them for as long as I can remember,
And all those years I was aware
That I was in the state of cancer if not cancerous yet.
My concern was laughed at.

Life is simpler now: no one will dream
Of looking further than my handless arm
For my deformity: it will be a hook to hang my troubles on,
For of course I shall wear a hook in its place
Rather than one of those prosthetic appliances,
And I shall join the ranks of other men
Who blame their troubles on similar unalterable situations
Such as the wife, or automation (the machine replacing the hand),
And they are right. Something is wrong with people
Who say it is me that's wrong, my nature needs changing.
Our nature is god's various will
And each oddity precious for the evolving animal kingdom.

Now that I am back to hunt and peck
I thank god for granting me this reprieve
From the endless unraveling of my nature.
Knots are too difficult for one hand to be bothered with:
Now I cut them through and laugh for the liberation.

JACK KEROUAC:

Essentials of Spontaneous Prose

SET-UP. The object is set before the mind, either in reality, as in sketching (before a landscape or teacup or old face) or is set in the memory wherein it becomes the sketching from memory of a definite image-object.

PROCEDURE. Time being of the essence in the purity of speech, sketching language is undisturbed flow from the mind of personal secret idea-words, *blowing* (as per jazz musician) on subject of image.

METHOD. No periods separating sentence-structures already arbitrarily riddled by false colons and timid usually needless commas—but the vigorous space dash separating rhetorical breathing (as jazz musician drawing breath between outblown phrases)—"measured pauses which are the essentials of our speech"—"divisions of the *sounds* we hear"—"time and how to note it down." (William Carlos Williams)

SCOPING. Not "selectivity" of expression but following free deviation (association) of mind into limitless blow-on-subject seas of thought, swimming in sea of English with no discipline other than rhythms of rhetorical exhalation and expostulated statement, like a fist coming down on a table with each complete utterance, bang! (the space dash)—Blow as deep as you want—write as deeply, fish as far down as you want, satisfy yourself first, then reader cannot fail to receive telepathic shock and meaning-excitement by same laws operating in his own human mind.

LAG IN PROCEDURE. No pause to think of proper word but the infantile pileup of scatalogical buildup words till satisfaction is gained, which will turn out to be a great appending rhythm to a thought and be in accordance with Great Law of timing.

TIMING. Nothing is muddy that *runs in time* and to laws of *time*—Shakespearian stress of dramatic need to speak now in own unalterable way or forever hold tongue—*no revisions* (except obvious rational mistakes, such as names or *calculated* insertions in act of not writing but *inserting*).

CENTER OF INTEREST. Begin not from preconceived idea of what to say about image but from jewel center of interest in subject of image at *moment* of writing, and write outwards swimming in sea of language to peripheral release and exhaustion—Do not afterthink except for poetic or P. S. reasons. Never afterthink to "improve" or defray impressions, as, the best writing is always the most painful personal wrung-out tossed from cradle warm protective mind—tap from yourself the song of yourself, *blow*!—*now*!—*your* way is your only way—"good"—or "bad"—always honest, ("ludicrous"), spontaneous, "confessional" interesting, because not "crafted." Craft *is* craft.

STRUCTURE OF WORK. Modern bizarre structures (science fiction, etc.) arise from language being dead, "different" themes give illusion of "new" life. Follow roughly outlines in outfanning movement over subject, as river rock, so mindflow over jewel-center need (run your mind over it, *once*) arriving at pivot, where what was dim formed "beginning" becomes sharp-necessitating "ending" and language shortens in race to wire of time-race of work, following laws of Deep Form, to conclusion, last words, last trickle—Night is The End.

MENTAL STATE. If possible write "without consciousness" in semi-trance (as Yeats' later "trance writing") allowing subconscious to admit in own uninhibited interesting necessary and so "modern" language what conscious art would censor, and write excitedly, swiftly, with writing-or-typing-cramps, in accordance (as from center to periphery) with laws of orgasm, Reich's "beclouding of consciousness." *Come* from within, out—to relaxed and said.

WILLIAM EASTLAKE:

Portrait of an Artist with Twenty-six Horses

With eyes wet and huge the deer watched. The boy watched back.

The boy crouched over a spring as though talking to the ground. The water plumed up bright through his turquoise-ringed hand, then eddied black in the bottomless whorl it had sculptured neat and sharp in the orange rock. The rock retreated to a blue, then again to an almost chrome yellow at the foot of the deer. The deer was coy, hesitant and grease-wood-camouflaged except for the eyes that watched. The boy watched back. Now the boy raised his ringed hand from the spring. The deer wheeled and fled noiselessly.

All around, above, and far beyond where the boy crouched at the spring the earth was on fire with beauty from a setting sun. The sky was on fire too and the spring water, tossing down the mesa, was ablaze. The long Jemez Range to the east had not caught fully. Soon it would catch. Not long after, in maybe half an hour, the world would go out.

The boy rose from his crouch over the spring and slung on a pack roll. Before the world went out he would have to go some distance. He could waste no more time talking to the ground.

Far off to the east and down in a valley, but still at an altitude of 7,500 feet, ran the town of Cuba. It was a collection of adobe shacks on the long wobble of asphalt going someplace else. A dark and handsome Navaho woman, disguised in the costume of city people, was stirring outside a restaurant labeled The Big Deal. She was hanging a sign that began, REAL LIVE WHITE PEOPLE. The Queen of Cuba City finished hanging the sign and went back inside. All of the sign said: REAL LIVE WHITE PEOPLE IN THEIR NATIVE COSTUMES DOING NATIVE DANCES.

"I don't think that's funny," James said. James, otherwise known as Twenty-six Horses, was her husband but he never came around the restaurant much. James had a rough and weathered face and he had a purple ribbon which knotted his hair in the back of his head, a custom that the young Navahos had abandoned.

"You can't compete with people by imitating their methods." James sat at the end of the counter and looked unhappy.

The Queen of Cuba City had begun her restaurant by excluding Navahos. That didn't seem to do much good so she refused service to Christians, Jews, Seventh Day Adventists, Apaches, and people from Florida, in about that order. Two weeks ago she had put up a sign: WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO REFUSE SERVICE TO EVERYBODY. That didn't seem to help business either.

"White people don't put up those signs to help business," James had said. "They put them up because they're sick."

"I'm not sick. I want to make an extra buck," the Queen of Cuba City said.

"An Indian who wants to make an extra buck is sick," James said.

"I should go back to those hogans a hundred miles from nowhere and die?"

"And live," James said. "An Indian dies in the city."

"An Indian can learn to live," she said. "Soon the hogans will not be a hundred miles from nowhere. What you going to do then?"

"Come back and we'll figure it out."

"I got a business," she said.

A customer came in and James went back to looking unhappy, sitting at the end of the counter.

"That's a good sign you got out there," the white man said and then he ordered a hamburger. "Did you ever see the sign: Your Face Is Honest But We Can't Put It In The Cash Register?"

The Queen of Cuba City was frying the hamburger and didn't hear the white man so the white man turned to James and said, "Did you ever see that sign: Women Don't—. Oh, you're an Indian," the white man said. "I was trying to explain a gag to an Indian," the white man hollered back to the Queen of Cuba City. James got up and walked out.

When the Queen of Cuba City brought the white man his hamburger the white man said, "He doesn't speak any English I hope. I hope I didn't hurt his feelings."

"Not much," the Queen of Cuba City said.

"You let Indians in here?"

"That was my husband."

"I'm sorry," the white man said, putting down the hamburger gently and examining it carefully. "You look white. You talk white. I hope I didn't hurt your feelings."

"Not much," she said. "I'm trying to make a buck."

"Oh," the man said, relaxing. "And you will, too." He bit into the hamburger and swallowed a mouthful. "You've got what it takes," he said.

On the outside of the Big Deal Cafe Ike Woodstock was standing near the steps talking to Rudy Guterriez about uranium and Evelyn and Tap Patman were standing in front of their service station beneath a sign that said Gulf Pride Motor Oil and between the STOPS-NOX and BE KIND TO YOUR ENGINE signs. Across the street Arpacio Montoyo was talking to the priest beneath a CLEAN REST ROOMS sign. They were talking about how many angels could stand on the head of a pin.

James looked around for his horse but a car was standing where he had left it. Mr. Patman came over and said, "I put your horse around back, James. Out here it's liable to get hit."

"What did you tell James, Tappy?" Evelyn asked.

"That I moved his horse. Liable to get hit."

"It got hit."

"By what?"

"That Olds 88."

"It's a 98."

"When I can't tell an 88 from a 98!"

Evelyn and Tap Patman walked over and identified the car as an 88 with 98 hub caps.

"There now, what is our world coming to?"

James saw at a glance that the horse was favoring his left hind leg. He examined the leg carefully, going down on one knee while the horse swung his great neck to examine James' head. The leg was not too bad, nothing broken, but he would have to lead it home, twenty miles through the back country. Not too bad.

He had ridden into Cuba City every week now for the last four months and at first he thought it would not be too bad. She would come home. Each time he was certain she would come home. Both of them had been certain too their boy would come home, home from the army, and he had—slightly damaged, but he had come home. He had stood around the hogan a few hours afraid to sit down on the rugs as though bugs would get him. He had kept standing in the middle of the hogan as though looking around the walls for windows, around the rough room for chairs and tables, a radio, a bed that stood on legs, a familiar white face. And then he was gone for Gallup. Outside the hogan he had taken a big deep breath, stuck his head back inside the hogan heavy with smoke, repeated something pleasant in English and then was gone for Gallup. He left, she said, because an artist can make a living there. "We got to make a living for him here," she said.

When James' wife came to Cuba City the first thing she did was refuse to speak Navaho. She leased the restaurant next to the Gulf Station from Tap Patman—sixty-eight dollars a month plus five per cent of the gross—hired four Spanish-Americans, fired a slovenly Anglo cook that was supposed to come with the place, stippled the rest rooms with neon, hung out a lot of white man's signs and concentrated on not speak-

ing Navaho.

"You speak Navaho and soon the place is full of Indians. Indians haven't any money and they come in and play chants on the juke box, look under things, ask what the signs mean, bring their wives in to show off their jewelry, make big talk about the kids their wives stack on cradle boards along the counter, make jokes about the whites—and they haven't any money. I left the reservation, I came to Cuba City, to open a restaurant because it's a white man's world and you have to make it the white man's way. Anything else is talking to the ground. The white man came, saw, stole; the Indian only smiled. Okay, make a joke, but the white man is Chee Dodge. Even if the white man wanted to stop pushing us under the table, and sometimes he wants to stop, he can't. All right, so our boy came home from the army. What is he? A weaver. All right, he is the best weaver in the checkerboard area. All right, on the reservation too. All right, he is what the trader calls him—an artist. But listen, Twenty-six Horses, the white man has a machine and listen, Twenty-six Horses, by the time it takes our boy to set his loom, listen, the white man has a thousand rugs. Listen, the white man has a machine. All right, the trader says the machine has the white man but that's Indian talk. The white man has a machine. Maybe he can't stop it, Twenty-six Horses, but he has a machine. Any way else is talking to the ground. It's a white world."

Twenty-six Horses had walked in front of his horse to the edge of Cuba City. Now no one would call him James. It was all right to call him James. James Trujillo, a good machine name, that's the way he made his mark in the government book. Twenty-six Horses was the name The People had given him when he had twenty-six horses. Now he had twenty-four, twenty-five, sometimes—once—he had thirty-four, but when they gave him the name he had twenty-six horses. That was a good name. It meant he was a big Chee Dodge.

The Indians named his wife the Queen of Cuba City when she moved into town and refused to speak Navaho. It was not a good name, it meant she was worse than an Apache—a Pueblo almost.

James had got the horse now to the top of the hill that overlooked Cuba. So they said his boy was an artist. Artist. What does their calling him an artist exactly mean? They meant nice by it he could tell by the tone, but it certainly had something to do with not being able to sell what you make. That was clear. It had something to do with not wanting to sell, too. The trader at Nargeezi had gotten the boy an order from a nice tribe of whites called the Masons. The Masons had even drawn the picture for him and left a ring with the same picture on it. Orders would follow from other nice tribes, the Kiwanis, the Elks, who wanted to help. They pay big. No, the boy had said. I do not feel it. James felt the Mason ring and he could feel it. "Here," the boy had said, touching just below his chest.

So an artist is a person who feels things just below his chest. All right, but he must feel something below that in his stomach too. Maybe that was why the boy left. Maybe his wife had been right. Maybe he wasn't looking around the hogan for a TV set or a bed with legs. Maybe the army had gotten him accustomed to three meals a day. Maybe an artist on the outside can make three meals a day.

"Can an artist on the outside make three meals a day?"

James had come upon a white man leaning on the side of his car on the Cuba Hill and he figured he might as well ask him as another.

"No," the white man said. "Tell me, what town is that?"

James told him it was Cuba City.

"You're an Indian, aren't you?"

"Yes," James said.

"Well, I can tell you I paid ten thousand dollars for this car," the man said. "It's got nearly three hundred horses.

I've been busting to tell somebody but on the outside you're not supposed to tell anybody. I can tell an Indian I guess."

"Ten thousand dollars! I didn't know it was possible," James said.

"Since last month it's been possible," the man said. "The Caddie people did it. Tell me, are you going to sell some paintings on the outside?"

"No. It's my boy," James said.

"That's too bad, " the man said. "If there's anything I can do to help, outside of buying one—?"

"I guess not," James said.

"Buying one would make it worse," the man said. "He'd only go through life under the delusion that he'd sell another."

"Maybe," James said.

"Everyone," the man said, "has been sane at one time or another in his life. He wants to create something, then he sees the way the world is going and decides he better go with it."

"Not even three meals a day?"

"Three meals a day is a lot of meals to give a man who will not go along."

Now that the man had made his speech and James had asked what he wanted, he pulled on his horse.

"Wait," the man said. "I can tell this to an Indian. Keep your boy here in the world. Don't let him get out there on the reservation. Out there we think we're on the outside looking in, but it's just the opposite, we're on the inside looking out. We are in there seeing who can be the biggest failure and we got a system of checking. We can always tell who wins. It's the man with the biggest car." The man leaning against the car hesitated. "Did you ever see a child's drawing?" the man said. "We have all got it and we all give it up."

The man had made two speeches now and James felt he could move on without being rude. He did, going on down the Cuba Hill pulling the horse after him.

The man continued leaning against the car watching the flowing sunset behind the purple rocks. He was one of the many vice-presidents of an oil company that was working the area. He always stopped where he could to enjoy a beautiful sight like this. Now he got back in the car and started her up. It was good to sound off. It wasn't often you got a chance. It wasn't often you could find someone like an Indian. And it would never get around. No one of his friends would ever suspect for a moment that he was sane.

James continued down the hill and wondered how a man like that was permitted out in the big reservation. It can only be that, like all the others, he never tells anyone.

But what the man had told him about artists was bad news for his boy. I wonder how you go about looking for someone out there? James had seen a television play in Arpacio Montoyo's bar. He had made his beer last to the end. It was about a girl who left home and the ending was that you should buy this soap. The man kept holding the soap up and hollering about the soap. It made a kind of exciting ending and probably a lot of sense too, if you grew up on the big reservation. The play might have been a solution to his problem. Certainly, James thought, if buying the soap of the man who was hollering would get his boy home he would buy all that man's soap the trader had. James was very worried about his boy.

James had reached the bottom of the north side of the Cuba Hill and started up the slight rise that had the only aspen grove at this altitude that anyone had ever heard of. The aspen leaves had ceased turning yellow and were waiting to fly into Ben Helpnell's porch when the wind blew. Ben Helpnell was out working on his new Monkey Ward pump beneath his abandoned wind mill. The new pump was the latest thing, later even than the jet pump. It worked on the theory that "it is easier to push water than it is to pull it. It is a hermetically sealed, self-contained unit and without any fuss or bother or expensive plumbers or electricians, you just

drop the whole thing in the well." Ben had done that yesterday and ever since he had been looking for it.

Ben saw James coming up and said, "I'm well shut of the damn thing." Ben was a horse and cattle trader and he saw now that James' horse was limping. But he had to work around to the subject gradually.

"I'm just as well shut of it," he repeated, but his heart had gone out of it. It was in the horse.

Suspecting a trade, James said nothing.

"Your wife's got some good signs out there," Ben said.

James did not want to talk about that.

"I ain't seen you by for a time," Ben said.

"My boy is gone," James said.

Ben studied over this for a while, looking down the well, then he looked over at the horse but his heart was no longer in the horse. It was involved now with James' grief.

"I tell you what, James," Ben said, studying the well again. "Take a horse, leave it off when you come back through."

Another day James would not have taken the horse first off. He would have hunched down, snapping sticks in his fingers and drawing pictures on the ground until they made a trade. It would have taken four or five hours, and Ben's wife might have changed clothes two or three times to impress the Indian. And James would choose his jewelry from the saddle bags to impress everyone and Ben would do a dance he picked up in Chihuahua that impressed even horses—all this to relieve the tension of the dealing when the excitement or the danger of closing became too real.

But now James' grief was in all their hearts and Mary would not want to change clothes three times, Ben would find no joy to do his dance nor James to show his jewelry. They would have only stumbled through a city deal with nothing to show for it except the grieving that James had brought.

"Take the blaze colt," Ben Helpnell said.

James transferred his saddle to the little blaze in the near corral while Ben Helpnell continued to stare down the well to figure the meaning of the lost pump.

"I should of tooken it back," he said, and finally standing up, "it's nothing against Monkey Ward. I must have done something wrong."

"You chunked it down the well," Mary said from where she watched behind a screen door.

"It said in the book—," and then Ben ceased, knowing that women will even contradict the book, and walked over to James at the corral.

James was weaving the cinch strap through its final gyrations before pulling good.

"Lots of horse," Ben Helpnell said. James swung into the saddle and started off leading his own horse with a rope in his dark right hand.

"When you get home he could be there," Ben Helpnell said.

"He could be there," James agreed, but he was not heard. He was already going up the road that led past the sawdust rotting remains of Girt Maxey's sawmill.

Two hours later he was going up the trail that led past the trading post then on up to the top of the piñon and pine studded mesa that looked out on his hogan below. His hogan below was smoking.

"He could be there."

No. He would shut his eyes and take another look. When he opened his eyes again a thin stream of blue cedar smoke still poured a fine column straight up from the middle of the conical hogan. He touched his horse and both of his horses flew off the mesa bearing straight down at the hogan with the long blue smoke.

No. This was not good. It would be pushing his luck too fast. He swung his horse in a great circle around the hogan and then stopped. Both of his horses were breathing hard and

the long blue cedar smoke still came out of the hogan. Now a quiet wind started and bent the long blue smoke until it curled heavy around James and the two horses. It was real smoke. But it would not do to go straight at the hogan. If luck was there it might be surprised away. Perhaps to call gently? James made a cup of his hands and called the boy's name toward the smoking hogan. Nothing happened but he did not want anything to happen so suddenly. He patted the blaze horse and looked back at his own horse at the end of the string.

"He could be there."

Now James cupped his dark hands again and called just a little more this time but still gently. And then he dropped his hands and watched quietly, careful that no move was made to disturb anything. The horses were very quiet too, as a hand pushed back the sheep flap at the hogan door and his boy stepped outside.

James waved. The horses began to move and the boy held both hands above his head.

The boy and James ate meat, coffee, and bread for a long time. When they had finished the meat and coffee and bread they had some more coffee with James not saying much, not wanting to push any of his luck away. The boy had been talking all along at a good pace without saying anything, but watching the heavy wooden loom on which he had begun to weave a picture. Finally he stopped and said, after a big pause and in English, "There, now, what's the world coming to when an artist won't settle for twenty-six horses?"

"No English spoken here," a voice said in Navaho. "The trader saw the smoke and sent a message that someone was home. I took down my signs in my restaurant and threw away the key. I finished with the restaurant. What's the world coming to when an Indian won't let the whites fight each other?"

James did not think it was time to recognize his luck but

he looked around the round room and recognized everything in it that was all gone yesterday and all here now. And outside, too, there were twenty-six horses.

"What's wrong with talking to the ground?"

This, James knew, was his wife called Married-To-The-Man-With-Twenty-six-Horses talking. It was not the Queen of Cuba City.

"What's wrong," the woman repeated, "with talking to the ground? The Navaho People talked to the ground before the white man came. We could do worse than be with our own People even when we are talking to the ground."

James knew now that Married-To-The-Man-With-Twenty-six-Horses and the son of Twenty-six Horses had all made their speech and were waiting for him to say the end. The end, he knew, must have some style. It must not be the endless speeches of the white man. It must have style. It should be about three words. It should be in the best manner of The People. He looked over at the powerfully simple mountains and rocks, abstract, in quiet beauty woven on the big loom. And yet The People seemed to be worried about talking to the ground.

"The earth understands," he said gently for the end.

DENISE LEVERTOV:

Scenes from the Life of the Peppertrees

I

The peppertrees, the peppertrees!

Cats are stretching in the doorways,
sure of everything. It is morning.
But the peppertrees
stand aside in diffidence, with berries
of modest red.
Branch above branch, an air
of lightness; of shadows
scattered lightly.
A cat
closes upon its shadow.
Up and up goes the sun,
sure of everything.
The peppertrees
shiver a little.
Robust
and soot-black, the cat
leaps to a low branch. Leaves
close about him.

II

The yellow moon dreamily
tipping buttons of light
down among the leaves. Marimba,
marimba—from beyond the
black street.
Somebody dancing,
somebody
getting the hell
outta here. Shadows of cats
weave round the treetrunks,
the exposed knotty roots.

III

The man on the bed sleeping
defenseless. Look—
his bare long feet together
sideways, keeping each other
warm. And the foreshortened shoulders,
the head
barely visible. He is good.
Let him sleep.
But the third peppertree
is restless, twitching
thin leaves in the light
of afternoon. After a while
it walks over and taps
on the upstairs window with a bunch
of red berries. Will he wake?

CHARLES OLSON: Human Universe

There are laws, that is to say, the human universe is as discoverable as that other. And as definable.

The trouble has been, that a man stays so astonished he can triumph over his own incoherence, he settles for that, crows over it, and goes at a day again happy he at least makes a little sense. Or if he says anything to another, he thinks it is enough—the struggle does involve such labor and some terror—to wrap it in a little mystery: ah, the way is hard but this is what you find if you go it.

The need now is a cooler one, a discrimination, and then, a shout. Der Weg stirbt, sd one. And was right, was he not? Then the question is: was ist der Weg?

I

The difficulty of discovery (in the close world which the human is because it is ourselves and nothing outside us, like the other) is, that definition is as much a part of the act as is sensation itself, in this sense, that life *is* preoccupation with itself, that conjecture about it is as much of it as its coming at us, its going on. In other words, we are ourselves both the instrument of discovery and the instrument of definition.

Which is of course, why language is a prime of the matter and why, if we are to see some of the laws afresh, it is necessary to examine, first, the present condition of the language—and I mean language exactly in its double sense of discrimination (logos) and of shout (tongue).

We have lived long in a generalizing time, at least since 450 B.C. And it has had its effects on the best of men, on the best of things. Logos, or discourse, for example, has, in that time, so worked its abstractions into our concept and use of language that language's other function, speech, seems so in need of restoration that several of us got back to hieroglyphs

or to ideograms to right the balance. (The distinction here is between language as the act of the instant and language as the act of thought about the instant.)

But one can't any longer stop there, if one ever could. For the habits of thought are the habits of action, and here, too, particularism has to be fought for anew. In fact, by the very law of the identity of definition and discovery, who can extricate language from action? (Though it is one of the first false faces of the law which I shall want to try to strike away, it is quite understandable—in the light of its identity—that the Greeks went on to declare all speculation as enclosed in the "UNIVERSE of discourse." It is their word, and the refuge of all metaphysicians since—as though language, too, was an absolute, instead of (as even man is) instrument, and not to be extended, however much the urge, to cover what each, man and language, is in the hands of: what we share, and which is enough, of power and of beauty, not to need an exaggeration of words, especially that spreading one, "universe." For discourse is hardly such, or at least only arbitrarily a universe. In any case, so extended (logos given so much more of its part than live speech), discourse has arrogated to itself a good deal of experience which needed to stay put—needs now to be returned to the only two universes which count, the two phenomenal ones, the two a man has need to bear on because they bear so on him: that of himself, as organism, and that of his environment, the earth and planets.

We stay unaware how two means of discourse the Greeks appear to have invented hugely intermit our participation in our experience, and so prevent discovery. They are what followed from Socrates' readiness to generalize, his willingness (from his own bias) to make a "universe" out of discourse instead of letting it rest in its most serviceable place. (It is not sufficiently observed that logos, and the reason necessary to it, are only a stage which a man must master and not what

they are taken to be, final discipline. Beyond them is direct perception and the contraries which dispose of argument. The harmony of the universe, and I include man, is not logical, or better, is post-logical, as is the order of any created thing.) With Aristotle, the two great means appear: logic and classification. And it is they that have so fastened themselves on habits of thought that action is interfered with, absolutely interfered with, I should say.

Nor can I let the third of the great Greeks, Plato, go free—he who had more of a sort of latitude and style my tribe of men are apt to indulge him for. His world of Ideas, of forms as extricable from content, is as much and as dangerous an issue as are logic and classification, and they need to be seen as such if we are to get on to some alternative to the whole Greek system. Plato may be a honey-head, as Melville called him, but he is precisely that—treacherous to all ants, and where, increasingly, my contemporaries die, or drown the best of themselves. Idealisms of any sort, like logic and like classification, intervene at just the moment they become more than the means they are, are allowed to become ways as end instead of ways *to* end, END, which is never more than this instant, than you on this instant, than you, figuring it out, and acting, so. If there is any absolute, it is never more than this one, you, this instant, in action.

Which ought to get us on. What makes most acts—of living and of writing—unsatisfactory, is that the person and/or the writer satisfy themselves that they can only make a form (what they say or do, or a story, a poem, whatever) by selecting from the full content some face of it, or plane, some part. And at just this point, by just this act, they fall back on the dodges of discourse, and immediately, they lose me, I am no longer engaged, this is not what I know is the going-on (and of which going-on I, as well as they, want some illumination, and so, some pleasure). It comes out a demonstration, a separating out, an act of classification, and so, a stopping, and

all that I know is, it is not there, it has turned false. For any of us, at any instant, are juxtaposed to any experience, even an overwhelming single one, on several more planes than the arbitrary and discursive which we inherit can declare.

It is not the Greeks I blame. What it comes to is ourselves, that we do not find ways to hew to experience as it is, in our definition and expression of it, in other words, find ways to stay in the human universe, and not be led to partition reality at any point, in any way. For this is just what we do do, this is the real issue of what has been, and the process, as it now asserts itself, can be exposed. It is the function, *comparison*, or, its bigger name, *symbology*. These are the false faces, too much seen, which hide and keep from us the active intellectual states, metaphor and performance. All that comparison ever does is set up a series of reference points: to compare is to take one thing and try to understand it by marking its similarities to or differences from another thing. Right here is the trouble, that each thing is not so much like or different from another thing (these likenesses and differences are apparent) but that such an analysis only accomplishes a *description*, does not come to grips with what really matters: that a thing, any thing, impinges on us by a more important fact, its self-existence, without reference to any other thing, in short, the very character of it which calls our attention to it, which wants us to know more about it, its particularity. This is what we are confronted by, not the thing's "class," any hierarchy, of quality or quantity, but the thing itself, and its *relevance* to ourselves who are the experience of it (whatever it may mean to someone else, or whatever other relations it may have).

There must be a means of expression for this, a way which is not divisive as all the tag ends and upendings of the Greek way are. There must be a way which bears *in* instead of away, which meets head on what goes on each split second, a way which does not—in order to define—prevent, deter, distract,

and so cease the act of, discovering.

I have been living for some time amongst a people who are more or less directly the descendants of a culture and civilization which was a contrary of that which we have known and of which we are the natural children. The marked thing about them is, that it is only love and flesh which seems to carry any sign of their antecedence, that all the rest which was once a greatness different from our own has gone down before the poundings of our way. And, now, except as their bodies jostle in a bus, or as they disclose the depth and tenacity of love among each other inside a family, they are poor failures of the modern world, incompetent even to arrange that, in the month of June, when the rains have not come far enough forward to fill the wells, they have water to wash in or to drink. They have lost the capacity of their predecessors to do anything in common. But they do one thing no modern knows the secret of, however he is still by nature, possessed of it: they wear their flesh with that difference which the understanding that it is common leads to. When I am rocked by the roads against any of them—kids, women, men—their flesh is most gentle, is granted, touch is in no sense anything but the natural law of flesh, there is none of that pull-away which, in the States, causes a man for all the years of his life the deepest sort of questioning of the rights of himself to the wild reachings of his own organism. The admission these people give me and one another is direct, and the individual who peers out from that flesh is precisely himself, is a curious wandering animal like me—it is so very beautiful how animal human eyes are when the flesh is not worn so close it chokes, how human and individuated the look comes out of a human eye when the house of it is not exaggerated.

This is not easy to save from subjectivism, to state so that you understand that this is not an observation but a first law to a restoration of the human house. For what is marked

about these Lermeros with whom I live (by contrast, for example, to the people of the city nearby) is that, here, the big-eared, small-eyed creatures stay as the minority they must always have been before garages made them valuable and allowed them out of their holes to proliferate and overrun the earth. Nothing is accident, and man, no less than nature, does nothing without plan or the discipline to make plan fact. And if it is true that we now live in fear of our own house, and can easily trace the reason for it, it is also true that we can trace reasons why those who do not or did not so live found out how to do other than we.

My assumption is, that these contemporary Maya are what they are because once there was a concept at work which kept attention so poised that (1) men were able to stay so interested in the expression and gesture of all creatures, including at least three planets in addition to the human face, eyes and hands, that they invented a system of written record, now called hieroglyphs, which, on its very face, is verse, the signs were so clearly and densely chosen that, cut in stone, they retain the power of the objects of which they are the images; (2) to mass stone with sufficient proportion to decorate a near hill and turn it into a fire-tower or an observatory or one post of an enclosure in which people, favored by its shadows, might swap caymotes for sandals; and (3) to fire clay into pots porous enough to sieve and thus cool water, strong enough to stew iguana and fish, and handsome enough to put ceremony where it also belongs, in the most elementary human acts. And when a people are so disposed, it should come as no surprise that, long before any of these accomplishments, the same people did an improvement on nature—the domestication of maize—which remains one of the world's wonders, even to a nation of Burbanks, and that long after all their accomplishments, they still carry their bodies with some of the savor and the flavor that the bodies of the Americans are as missing in as is their irrigated lettuce and their green-

picked refrigerator-ripened fruit. For the truth is, that the management of external nature so that none of its virtu is lost, in vegetables or in art, is as much a delicate juggling of her content as is the same juggling by any one of us of our own. And when men are not such jugglers, are not able to manage a means of expression the equal of their own or nature's intricacy, the flesh does choke. The notion of fun comes to displace work as what we are here for. Spectatorism crowds out participation as the condition of culture. And bonuses and prizes are the rewards of labor contrived by the monopolies of business and government to protect themselves from the advancement in position of able men or that old assertion of an inventive man, his own shop. All individual energy and ingenuity is bought off—at a suggestion box or the cinema. Passivity conquers all. Even war and peace die (to be displaced by world government?) and man reverts to only two of his components, inertia and gas.

It is easy to phrase, too easy, and we have had enough of bright description. To say that in America the goods are as the fruits, and the people as the goods, all glistening but tasteless, accomplishes nothing in itself, for the overwhelming fact is, that the rest of the world wants nothing but to be the same. Value is perishing from the earth because no one cares to fight down to it beneath the glowing surfaces so attractive to all. Der Weg stirbt.

II

Can one restate man in any way to repossess him of his dynamic? I don't know. But for myself a first answer lies in his systemic particulars. The trouble with the inherited formulations which have helped to destroy him (the notion of himself as the center of phenomenon by fiat or of god as the center and man as god's chief reflection) is that both set aside nature as an unadmitted or suppressed third party, a sort of Holy Ghost which was allowed in once to touch men's tongues

and then, because the fire was too great, was immediately banished to some sort of half place in between god and the devil—who actually, of course, thereby became the most powerful agent of all. The result, we have been the witnesses of: discovering this discarded thing nature, science has run away with everything. Tapping her power, fingering her like a child, giving her again her place, but without somehow, remembering what truth there was in man's centering the use of anything, god, devil, or holy ghost, in himself, science has upset all balance and blown value, man's peculiar responsibility, to the winds.

If unselectedness is man's original condition (such is more accurate a word than that lovely riding thing, chaos, which sounds like what it is, the most huge generalizations of all, obviously make it necessary for man to invent a bearded giant to shape it for him) but if likewise, selectiveness is just as originally the impulse by which he proceeds to do something about the unselectedness, then one is forced, is one not, to look for some instrumentation in man's given which makes selection possible. And it has gone so far, that is, science has, as to wonder if the fingertips, are not very knowing knots in their own rights, little brains (little photo-electric cells, I think they now call the skin) which, immediately, in responding to external stimuli, make decisions! It is a remarkable and usable idea. For it is man's first cause of wonder how rapid he is in his taking in of what he does experience.

But when you have said that, have you not done one of two things, either forever damned yourself by making "soul" mechanical (it has long been the soul which has softly stood as a word to cover man as a selecting internal reality posed dangerously in the midst of those externals which the word chaos generously covers like Williams' paint) or you have possibly committed a greater crime. You have allowed that external reality is more than merely the substance which man takes in. By making the threshold of reception so important

and by putting the instrumentation of selection so far out from its traditional place (the greatest humanist of them all opened a sonnet, "Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth"), you have gone so far as to imply that the skin itself, the meeting edge of man and external reality, is where all that matters does happen, that man and external reality are so involved with one another that, for man's purposes, they had better be taken as one.

It is some such crime by which I am willing to hazard a guess at a way to restore to man some of his lost relevance. For this metaphor of the senses—of the literal speed of light by which a man absorbs, instant on instant, all that phenomenon presents to him—is a fair image as well, my experience tells me, of the ways of his inner energy, of the ways of those other things which are usually, for some reason, separated from the external pick-ups—his dreams, for example, his thoughts, (to speak as the predecessors spoke), his desires, sins, hopes, fear, faiths, loves. I am not able to satisfy myself that these so-called inner things are so separable from the objects, persons, events which are the content of them and by which man represents or re-enacts them despite the suck of symbol which has increased and increased since the great Greeks first promoted the idea of a transcendent world of forms. What I do see is that each man does make his own special selection from the phenomenal field, and it is true that we begin to speak of personality, however I remain unaware that this particular act of individuation is peculiar to man, observable as it is in individuals of other species of nature's making (it behooves man now not to separate himself too jauntily from any of nature's creatures).

Even if one does follow personality up, does take the problem further in to those areas of function which may seem more peculiarly human (at least are more peculiarly the concern of a humanist), I equally cannot satisfy myself of the gain in thinking that the process by which man transposes

phenomena to his use is any more extricable from reception than reception itself is from the world. What happens at the skin is more like than different from what happens within. The process of image (to be more exact about transposition than the "soul" allows or than the analysts do with their tricky "symbol-maker") cannot be understood by separation from the stuff it works on. Here again, as throughout experience, the law remains, form is not isolated from content. The error of all other metaphysic is descriptive, is the profound error that Heisenberg had the intelligence to admit in his principle that a thing can be measured in its mass only by arbitrarily assuming a stopping of its motion, or in its motion only by neglecting, for the moment of the measuring, its mass. And either way, you are failing to get what you are after—so far as a human being goes, his life. There is only one thing you can do about kinetic, re-enact it. Which is why the man said, he who possesses rhythm possesses the universe. And why art is the only twin life has—its only valid metaphysic. Art does not seek to describe but to enact. And if man is once more to possess intent in his life, and to take up the responsibility implicit in his life, he has to comprehend his own process as intact, from outside, by way of his skin, in, and by his own powers of conversion, out again.

For there is this other part of the motion which we call life to be examined anew, that thing we overlove, man's action, that tremendous discharge of force which we overlove when we love it for its own sake but which (when it is good) is the equal of all intake plus all transposing. It deserves this word, that it is equal of its cause only when it proceeds unbroken from the threshold of a man through him and back out again, without loss of quality, to the external world from which it came, whether that external world take the shape of another human being or of the several human beings hidden by the generalization "society" or of things themselves. In other words, the proposition here is that man at his peril breaks

the full circuit of object, image, action at any point. The meeting edge of man and the world is also his cutting edge. If man is active, it is exactly here where experience comes in that it is delivered back, and if he stays fresh at the coming in he will be fresh at his going out. If he does not, all that he does inside his house is stale, more and more stale as he is less and less acute at the door. And his door is where he is responsible to more than himself. Man does influence external reality, and it can be stated without recourse to the stupidities of mysticism (which appears to love a mystery as much outside at it does in). If man chooses to treat external reality any differently than as part of his own process, in other words as anything other than relevant to his own inner life, then he will (being such a froward thing, and bound to use his energy willy-nilly, nature is so subtle) use it otherwise. He will use it just exactly as he has used it now for too long, for arbitrary and willful purposes which, in their effects, not only change the face of nature but actually arrest and divert her force until man turns it even against herself, he is so powerful, this little thing. But what little willful modern man will not recognize is, that when he turns it against her he turns it against himself, held in the hand of nature as man forever is, to his use of himself if he choose, to his disuse, as he has.

What gets me is, how man refuses to acknowledge the consequences of his disposing of himself at his own entrance—as though a kiss were a cheap thing, as though he were. He will give a Rimbaud a lot of lip and no service at all, as though Rimbaud were a sport of nature and not a proof. Or a people different from himself—they will be the subject of historians' studies or of tourists' curiosity, and be let go at that, no matter how much they may disclose values he and his kind, you would think, could make use of. I have found, for example, that the hieroglyphs of the Maya disclose a placement of themselves toward nature of enormous contradiction to ourselves, and yet I am not aware that any of the possible usages of this difference have been allowed to seep out into present

society. All that is done is what a Toynbee does, diminish the energy once here expended into the sieve phonetic words have become to be offered like one of nature's pastes that we call jewels to be hung as a decoration of knowledge upon some Christian and therefore eternal and holy neck. It is unbearable what knowledge of the past has been allowed to become, what function of human memory has been dribbled out to in the hands of these learned monsters whom people are led to think "know." They know nothing in not knowing how to reify what they do know. What is worse, they do not know how to pass over to us the energy implicit in any high work of the past because they purposely destroy that energy as dangerous to the states for which they work—which it is, for any concrete thing is a danger to rhetoricians and politicians, as dangerous as a hard coin is to a banker. And the more I live the more I am tempted to think that the ultimate reason why man departs from nature and thus departs from his own chance is that he is part of a herd which wants to do the very thing which nature disallows—that energy can be lost. When I look at the filth and lumber which man is led by, I see man's greatest achievement in this childish accomplishment—that he damn well can, and does, destroy destroy destroy energy every day. It is too much. It is too much to waste time on, this idiot who spills his fluids like some truculent and fingerless chamaco hereabouts who wastes water at the pump when birds are dying all over the country in this hottest of the months and women come in droves in the morning begging for even a tasa of the precious stuff to be poured in the amporas they swing on their hips as they swing their babies. Man has made himself an ugliness and a bore.

It was better to be a bird, as these Maya seem to have been, they kept moving their heads so nervously to stay alive, to keep alerted to what they were surrounded by, to watch it even for the snake they took it to be or that larger bird they had to be in awe of, the zopalote who fed on them when they

were dead or whom they looked at of a morning in a great black heap like locusts tearing up a deer that had broken his wind or leg in the night. Or even Venus they watched, as though they were a grackle themselves and could attack her vertically in her house full of holes like a flute through which, they thought, when she had the upper hand she spread down on them, on an east wind, disease and those blows on their skin they call granitos. When she was new, when she buzzed the morning sky, they hid in their houses for fear of her, Shoosh Ek, for fear of her bite, the Wasp she was, the way she could throw them down like that electrical stick which, last year, pinched one of these fishermen on his cheek, in all the gulf hit him as he sat in the prow of his cayuco with a line out for dogfish of a day and laid him out dead, with no more mark burned on him than that little tooth of a kiss his wife was given as cause when they brought him out over the beach as he might have hauled in a well-paying shark.

Or to be a man and a woman as Sun was, the way he had to put up with Moon, from start to finish the way she was, the way she behaved, and he up against it because he did have the advantage of her, he moved more rapidly. In the beginning he was only young and full of himself, and she, well, she was a girl living with her grandfather doing what a girl was supposed to be doing, making cloth. Even then he had the advantage of her, he hunted, instead, and because he could hunt he could become a humming-bird, which he did, just to get closer to her, this loveliness he thought she was and wanted to taste. Only the trouble was, he had to act out his mask, and while he was coming closer, one tobacco flower to another toward the house, her grandfather brought him down with a clay shot from a blow gun. And sun fell, right into moon's arms, who took him to her room to mother him, for she was all ready to be a wife, a man's second mother as a wife is in these parts where birds are so often stoned and need to be brought back to consciousness and, if they have

their wings intact, may fly away again. As sun was. Only he could also talk, and persuaded moon to elope with him in a canoe. But there you are: there is always danger. Grandfather gets rain to throw his fire at them and though sun converts to turtle and is tough enough to escape alive, moon, putting on a crab shell, is not sufficiently protected and is killed.

Which is only part of it, that part of it which is outside and seems to have all of the drama. But only seems. For dragonflies collect moon's flesh and moon's blood in thirteen hollow logs, the sort of log sun had scooped his helpless runaway boat out of, thinking he had made it, had moon finally for his own. Foolish sun. For now here he is back again, after thirteen days, digging out the thirteen logs, and finding that twelve of them contain nothing but all the insects and all the snakes which fly and crawl about the earth of man and pester people in a hot climate so that a lot die off before they are well begun and most are ready, at any instant, for a sickness or a swelling, and the best thing to do is to lie quiet, wait for the poison to pass. For there is log 13, and it reveals moon restored to life, only moon is missing that part which makes woman woman, and deer alone, only deer can give her what he does give her so that she and sun can do what man and woman have the pleasure to do as one respite from the constant hammering.

But you see, nothing lasts. Sun has an older brother, who comes to live with sun and moon, and sun has reason to suspect that something is going on between moon and the big star, for this brother is the third one of the sky, the devilish or waspish one who is so often with moon. By a trick, sun discovers them, and moon, dispirited, sitting off by herself on the river bank, is persuaded by the bird zopalote to go off with him to the house of the king of the vultures himself. And though a vulture is not, obviously, as handsome a thing as the sun, do not be fooled into thinking that this bird which can darken the sky as well as feed on dead things until they

are only bones for the sun to whiten, has not his attractions, had not his attractions to moon, especially the king of them all. She took him, made him the third of her men, and was his wife.

But sun was not done with her, with his want of her, and he turned to that creature which empowered her, the deer, for aid. He borrowed a skin, and hiding under it—knowing as hot sun does the habits of vultures—he pretends to be a carcass. The first vulture comes in, landing awkwardly a distance off, hobbles his nervous way nearer until, as he is about to pick apart what he thinks is a small deer, sun leaps on his back and rides off to where moon is. He triumphantly seizes her, only to find that she is somewhat reluctant to return.

At which stage, for reasons of cause or not, sun and moon go up into the sky to assume forever their planetary duties. But sun finds there is one last thing he must do to the moon before human beings are satisfied with her. He must knock out one of her eyes, they complain she is so bright and that they cannot sleep, the night is so much the same as his day, and his day is too much anyhow, and a little of the sweetness of the night they must have. So he does, he puts out her eye, and lets human beings have what they want. But when he does more, when, occasionally, he eclipses her entirely, some say it is only a sign that the two of them continue to fight, presumably because sun cannot forget moon's promiscuity, though others say that moon is forever erratic, is very much of a liar, is always telling sun about the way people of the earth are as much misbehavers as she, get drunk, do the things she does, in fact, the old ones say, moon is as difficult to understand as any bitch is.

O, they were hot for the world they lived in, these Maya, hot to get it down the way it was—the way it is, my fellow citizens.

EDWARD DORN: Vaquero

The cowboy stands beneath
a brick-orange moon. The top
of his oblong head is blue, the sheath
of his hips
is too.

In the dark brown night
your delicate cowboy stands quite still.
His plain hands are crossed.
His wrists are embossed white.

In the background night is a house,
has a blue chimney top,
Yi Yi, the cowboy's eyes
are blue. The top of the sky
is too.

KENNETH KOCH: Desire for Spring

Calcium days, days when we feed our bones!
Iron days, which enrich our blood!
Saltwater days, which give us valuable iodine!
When will there be a perfectly ordinary spring day?
For my heart needs to be fed, not my urine
Or my brain, and I wish to leap to Pittsburgh
From Tuskegee, Indiana, if necessary, spreading like a flower
In the spring light, and growing like a silver stair.
Nothing else will satisfy me, not even death!
Not even broken life insurance policies, cancer, loss of health,
Ruined furniture, prostate disease, headaches, melancholia,
No, not even a ravaging wolf eating up my flesh!
I want spring, I want to turn like a mobile
In a new fresh air! I don't want to hibernate
Between walls, between halls! I want to bear
My share of the anguish of being succinctly here!
Not even moths in the spell of the flame
Can want it to be warmer so much as I do!
Not even the pilot slipping into the great green sea
In flames can want less to be turned into an icicle!
Though admiring the icicle's cunning, how shall I be satisfied
With artificial daisies and roses, and wax pears?
O breeze, my lovely, come in, that I mayn't be stultified!
Dear coolness of heaven, come swiftly and sit on my chairs!

DAVID LYTTLE: Lady Overboard

I lie here in the drowning sun,
Thumbing a dirty book of art.
(Bathers burnt as marshmallows run)
I lie here, comfortably apart
And camping by a fire, like hell.

Who quivers there with lily skin
In gilded waters, to the waist?
It is a lady fallen in,
A lady shy and rare and chaste.
Nor is she looking very well.

Who now is in a shuddering skin
In waters of the whirling night?
It is a female fallen in.
(And maybe bathers sweat and fight.
More likely they have kissed farewell)

I lie here, and the waters roar
And embers glisten on her belly,
And she wallows for the shore.
O Botticelli, Botticelli,
She has fallen from the shell.

—*Ben Enwonwu*

AMOS TUTUOLA:

The Animal that Died but his Eyes still Alive

The big gun that stops the voices of the soldiers
Animals are surplus in the town in which the people have no teeth

As I [Adebisi, the African huntress] was travelling along in this jungle it was so I was killing all the wild animals that I was seeing on the way. When I saw that the night was approaching I shot one small animal to death. I made a big fire and I roasted this animal which was an antelope, in the fire. Before I ate it to my satisfaction it was about ten o'clock in the night. But anyhow I ate out of it as I could and I kept the rest of it near the fire which I would eat in the morning. After that I lay down near this fire and then I slept but there was nothing which was happened to me throughout this night.

When I woke up in the morning by the crying of birds and when the dove gave the sign of eight o'clock, then I ate the rest of that roasted animal. After that I hung my gun and hunting bag on my shoulder having checked the gun and saw that it was in good order. Then I started to look for the wild animals to be killed. And within three days I nearly killed the whole of the wild animals of this jungle. It was very scarcely to see one or two and I was very happy about this, but it still remained three big troubles—how to drive away all the pigmies from this jungle as they used to detain hunters in their custody. How to kill the dangerous animals who had light on eyes and how to kill a very curious and dangerous boa constrictor which was very dangerous to the hunters as well.

After I nearly killed the whole of the wild animals, I did not travel more than seven days when I came across a big wild animal. It was as big as an elephant. I had never seen the kind of this animal before. Because he had a very big

head. Several horns were on his forehead. Each of the horns was as long and thick and sharp as cows' horns. Very long black and brown hairs were full this head and they were fallen downward, they were also very dirty. All the horns were stood upright on his forehead as if a person carried a bunch of sticks vertically. His beard was so plenty and long that it covered his chest and belly as well. The teeth of his mouth were so plenty and long that whenever he was eating a person who was in two miles away would be hearing the noises which they were making. Even as the teeth and the horns of his mouth and head were so fearful many of the wild animals who saw him when he was coming to kill them with all these things were dying for themselves before he would reach them instead to kill them witth his teeth and horns, because they were too fearful to them.

He had two curious eyes which were as accurate as full moon of the dry season. Both were on the right part of his head as the other animals did, but each was bigger and could see everywhere without moving head. The powerful light that these eyes were bringing out could not go far or straight but they were bringing out the clear and round light. The ray of this light was always round him and it could be seen clearly from a long distance.

He had a kind of a terrible shout with which he was frightening the animals and his humming was also terrible to hear. All the rest animals were so hated and feared him that they never went near the place that he travelled for one week.

There was none part of his body which was not terrible and which was not frightened neither human being nor other creature of this world.

Immediately I saw this "super-animal" as I could call him, in that morning through the round clear light of his eyes, was that I stopped in one place and I first breathed out heavily with great fear. Because I could not escape again, I had already approached him too closely before I saw him. And at

the same moment that he too saw me, although I was still quite aloof when he first saw me. He first sighted all his horns towards me and then he was running to me as fast as he could. But when I thought within myself that if I stood on the ground and shot him, he would kill me instantaneously, because my "shakabullah" gun would not be able to kill him in one shot, therefore I hastily climbed a tree to the top.

But when he ran to the place that I had stood before and he did not meet me there again. He was going round and round until when he saw me on top of this tree. As I was on top of this tree I thought that I was saved but not at all. Because at the same moment that he saw me on top of this tree, he started to bite the tree at the bottom. And to my fear within two minutes he had nearly bitten the whole bottom of this tree. When I saw that the tree was just toppling to the ground, just to safe my life, I hastily jumped from there to the top of another mighty tree which was nearby. And when he saw me on top of this mighty tree again, he started to bite the bottom of it as well and he was in great anger this time because he wanted to eat me without much trouble as this.

And when I saw that this mighty tree was toppling down as well, then I hastily sold my "death," I said within myself that before this "super-animal" would kill me I must first defend myself perhaps I would be saved. Then without hesitation I shot him. But when the gun-shots hit him on the chest and hurt him as well on the hind legs. It was this time this "super-animal" became more powerful and more dangerous than ever. And it was this day that I believed that—the half killed snake is the most dangerous. Because this animal was then shrieking and shouting and humming more terribly with angry voice than ever. His fearful humming was hearing all over the jungle.

He was jumping and dashing to the trees, rocks, etc. and within a few minutes he had broken down all the trees of that

area and scattered everything in disorder with great anger. When he came back to the tree on top of which I was he started to bite the bottom of this tree until it fell down. This tree hardly fell down when he jumped on me, but I was so lucky that immediately this tree fell on hard ground, it sprang up again before it lay down quietly, I fell off from it to a little distance, so by that he missed me to grip with his paws. Of course I hit my back on another tree which was near that spot and that gave me much pain. And as I was hastily standing up he had jumped high up and as he was coming down just to cover the whole of me, I hastily lay flatly on the ground and then he simply rolled along on the ground instead. Before he stood up again I had taken my cutlass and I was waiting for him at once.

Within one second he had stood up, but he did not attempt to bite me this time, he wanted to hit me to death with his horns. But at the same moment that I saw what he wanted to do this time, I hastily leapt to my left when he was about to butt me with his horns and I cut him several times with my cutlass within this moment, so he simply butted a heavy rock instead when he missed me. He hardly missed me when he turned to his back and as he was coming again with great anger, I hastily leaned my back on the stump of the big tree which he had cut down, and I exposed my chest and belly in such a deceived way that he believed that he would not miss me as before. So as he was running furiously towards me with all his power and when he was about to reach me, I hastily leapt again to my right unexpectedly and unfortunately he simply butted the stump of that tree. So all his horns pierced this stump of tree, he could not pull them out but he was held up there helplessly, except his hind legs with which he was scattering the ground very roughly.

After I rested for a few minutes then I started to beat him with my poisonous cudgel until when he was completely powerless and then he died after some minutes. It was like

that I killed this "super-animal" as I could call him. But to my surprise was that as he had already dead the light of his eyes was still shining clearly and thus it was when I left there.

After I had killed this animal I started to look about for the fearful boa constrictor which my father had told me about his news that he (boa) was also very dangerous. As I was looking for this boa constrictor it was so I was killing all the wild animals which I was seeing on the way. And in a few days time I killed the whole of them. So this time there was no more the fear of the wild animals again in this jungle except the fears of this terrible boa constrictor and the pigmies. I roamed about for several days but I did not come across this boa until one day when I travelled back to the place where I had killed "super-animal" unnoticed. But it was still a great surprise to see that the light of the eyes of this animal was still shining clearly. The flesh of his body was already decayed and the bones were already scattered on the ground but the eyes which brought out this light was still alive, the light was as clear as when the animal was still alive. So the eyes and the long hairs which were covered the skull were still on this skull as well and all the horns were still on the skull but they were still pierced the stump of that tree since the day that the animal had butted it (stump) himself.

In the first instance that I came there unexpectedly and when I saw this head with the clear light I thought that the animal had become alive after I had left there the other day. I stood before this head and I started to think of what to do with it, because the clear light which came out from the eyes was very attractively. When I thought what to do with it for a few minutes and I did not know yet so I pulled the head out of the stump. I first trimmed the hairs of the head very short then I cut those long horns very short too after that I trimmed the inside of the skull very neatly. But to my surprise when I put this skull or head on my head it was my exact size and it seemed on my head as a cock helmet. I was

seeing clearly through the eyes and the light of the eyes travelled far away in the jungle but I was then so fearful that there was not any living creature which would see me would not run away for fear because I was exactly as when that animal was alive. So when I believed that it would help me in future I wrapped it with the skin of animal and I kept it in my hunting bag. As from that day I was using it in the night as my light and I was wearing it on the head whenever I was hunting. So this wonderful head became a very useful thing at last.

ROLAND BARTHES: Alain Robbe-Grillet

> **Objective** *n.* In optics, the lens situated nearest the object to be observed and receiving the rays of light directly from it.–*Oxford English Dictionary*

High on the pediment of the Gare Montparnasse is a tremendous neon sign that would read *Bons-Kilomètres* if several of its letters were not regularly out of commission. For Alain Robbe-Grillet, this sign would be an object par excellence, especially appealing for the various dilapidations that mysteriously change places with each other from one day to the next. There are, in fact, many such objects—extremely complicated, somewhat unreliable—in Robbe-Grillet's books. They generally occur in urban landscapes (street directories, postal schedules, professional-service signs, traffic signals, gatehouse fences, bridge superstructures) or else in commonplace interiors (light switches, erasers, a pair of glasses, percolators, dressmaker's dummies, packaged sandwiches). "Natural" objects are rare (the tree of the third "Reflected Vision,"[1] the tidal estuary of *Le Chemin du Retour*), immediately abstracted from man and nature alike, and primarily represented as the instruments of an "optical" perception of the world.

All these objects are described with an application apparently out of all proportion to their insignificant—or at least purely functional—character. Description for Robbe-Grillet is always "anthological"—a matter of presenting the object as if in a mirror, as if it were in itself a *spectacle*, permitting it to make demands on our attention without regard for its relation to the dialectic of the story. The indiscreet object is simply *there*, enjoying the same freedom of exposition as one of Balzac's portraits, though without the same excuse of psychological necessity. Furthermore, Robbe-Grillet's

[1] See "Three Reflected Visions," *Evergreen Review* Vol. I, No. 3.

descriptions are never allusive, never attempt, for all their aggregation of outlines and substances, to concentrate the entire significance of the object into a single metaphorical attribute (Racine: "Dans l'Orient *désert*, quel devint mon ennui."[2] Or Hugo: "Londres, une *rumeur* sous une *fumée*."[3]) His writing has no alibis, no resonance, no depth, keeping to the surface of things, examining without emphasis, favoring no one quality at the expense of another—it is as far as possible from poetry, or from "poetic" prose. It does not explode, this language, or explore, nor is it obliged to charge upon the object and pluck from the very heart of its substance the one ambiguous name that will sum it up forever. For Robbe-Grillet, the function of language is not a raid on the absolute, a violation of the abyss, but a progression of names over a surface, a patient unfolding that will gradually "paint" the object, caress it, and along its whole extent deposit a patina of tentative identifications, no single term of which could stand by itself for the presented object.

On the other hand, Robbe-Grillet's descriptive technique has nothing in common with the painstaking artisanry of the naturalistic novelist. Traditionally, the latter accumulates observations and instances qualities as a function of an implicit judgment: the object has not only form, but odor, tactile properties, associations, analogies—it bristles with *signals* that have a thousand means of gaining our attention, and never with impunity, since they invariably involve a human impulse of appetency or rejection. But instead of the naturalist's syncretism of the senses, which is anarchic yet ultimately oriented toward judgment, Robbe-Grillet requires only one mode of perception: the sense of sight. For him the object is no longer a common-room of correspondences, a welter of sensations and symbols, but merely the occasion of a certain optical resistance.

[2] In the *empty* Orient, how great my suffering became.
[3] London, a *murmur* beneath a *fog*.

This preference for the visual enforces some curious consequences, the primary one being that Robbe-Grillet's object is never drawn in three dimensions, in depth: it never conceals a secret, vulnerable heart beneath its shell (and in our society is not the writer traditionally the man who penetrates beneath the surface to the heart of the matter?). But for Robbe-Grillet the object has no being beyond *phenomenon*: it is not ambiguous, not allegorical, not even opaque, for opacity somehow implies a corresponding transparency, a dualism in nature. The scrupulosity with which Robbe-Grillet describes an object has nothing to do with such doctrinal matters: instead he establishes the existence of an object so that once its appearance is described it will be quite drained, consumed, used up. And if the author then lays it aside, it is not out of any respect for rhetorical proportion, but because the object has no further resistance than that of its surfaces, and once these are exploited language must withdraw from an engagement that can only be alien to the object—henceforth a matter of mere literature, of poetry or rhetoric. Robbe-Grillet's silence about the "romantic" heart of the matter is neither allusive nor ritual, but *limiting*: forcibly determining the boundaries of a thing, not searching for what lies beyond them. A slice of tomato in an automat sandwich, described according to this method, constitutes an object without heredity, without associations, and without references, an object rigorously confined to the order of its components, and refusing with all the stubbornness of its *there*ness to involve the reader in an *elsewhere,* whether functional or substantial. "The human condition," Heidegger has said, "is to be *there*." Robbe-Grillet himself has quoted this remark apropos of *Waiting for Godot,* and it applies no less to his own objects, of which the chief condition, too, is to be *there*. The whole purpose of this author's work, in fact, is to confer upon an object its "being *there*," to keep it from being "something."

Robbe-Grillet's object has therefore neither function nor

substance. More precisely, both its function and substance are absorbed by its optical nature. For example, we would ordinarily say, "So-and-so's dinner was ready: some ham." This would be an adequate representation of the function of an object—the alimentary function of the ham. Here is how Robbe-Grillet says it: "On the kitchen table there are three thin slices of ham laid across a white plate." Here function is treacherously usurped by the object's sheer existence: thinness, position, and color establish it far less as an article of food than as a complex organization of space; far less in relation to its natural function (to be eaten) than as a point in a visual itinerary, a site in the murderer's route from object to object, from surface to surface. Robbe-Grillet's object, in fact, invariably possesses this mystifying, almost hoaxing power: its technological nature, so to speak, is immediately apparent, of course—the sandwiches are to be eaten, the erasers to rub out lines, the bridges to be crossed—it is never in itself remarkable, its *apparent* function readily makes it a part of the urban landscape or commonplace interior in which it is found. But the *description* of the object somehow exceeds its function in every case, and at the very moment we expect the author's interest to lapse, having exhausted the object's instrumentality, that interest persists, *insists*, bringing the narrative to a sudden, untimely halt and transforming a simple implement into space. Its usefulness, we discover, was merely an illusion, only its optical extension is real—its humanity begins where its function leaves off.

Substance, in Robbe-Grillet's work, suffers the same queer misappropriation. We must remember that for every writer of the nineteenth century—Flaubert is an excellent example—the "coenesthesia" of substance—its undifferentiated mass of organic sensation—is the source of all sensibility. Since the beginning of the romantic movement it has been possible to establish a kind of thematic index of substance for each writer precisely to the degree that an object is not visual for

him but tactile, thereby involving his reader in a *visceral* sense of matter (appetite or nausea). For Robbe-Grillet, on the contrary, the supremacy of the visual, the sacrifice of all the "inner" attributes of an object to its "superficial" existence (consider, by the way, the moral discredit traditionally attached to this mode of perception) eliminates every chance of an affective or "humoral" relation with it. The sense of sight produces an existential impulse only to the degree that it serves as a shorthand for a sense of touch, of chewing, hiding, or burying. Robbe-Grillet, however, never permits the visual sense to be overrun by the visceral, but mercilessly severs it from its usual associations.

In the entire published work of this author, I can think of only one metaphor, a single adjective suggesting *substance* rather than superficies, and applied, moreover, to the only psychoanalytic object in his repertoire: the softness of erasers ("I want a very *soft* eraser"). Except for this unique tactile qualification, more or less called for by the peculiar gratuitousness of the object for which *Les Gommes* is so scandalously or so enigmatically named, the work of Robbe-Grillet is susceptible to no thematic index whatsoever: the visual apprehension which entirely permeates his writing cannot establish metaphorical correspondences, or even institute reductions of qualities to some common symbol; can, in fact, propose only symmetries.

By his exclusive and tyrannical appeal to the sense of sight, Robbe-Grillet undoubtedly intends the assassination of the object, at least as literature has traditionally represented it. His undertaking is an arduous one, however, for in literature, at least, we live, without even taking the fact into account, in a world based on an organic, not a visual order. Therefore the first step of this knowing murder must be to isolate objects, to alienate them as much from their usual functions as from our own biology. Our author allows them a merely *superficial* relation to their situation in space, deprives them of all possi-

bility of metaphor, withdraws them from that state of corresponding forms and analogous states which has always been the poet's hunting ground (and who can be in much doubt today as to what extent the myth of poetic "power" has contaminated every order of literary activity?).

But what is most difficult to kill off in the classical treatment of the object is the temptation to use the particular term, the singular, the—one might almost say—*gestaltist* adjective that ties up all its metaphysical threads in a single subsuming knot ("Dans l'Orient *désert* . . ."). What Robbe-Grillet is trying to destroy is, in the widest sense of the word, the adjective itself: the realm of qualification, for him, can be only spatial or situational, but in no case can it be a matter of analogy. Perhaps painting can provide us (taking all the precautions this kind of comparison imposes) with a relevant opposition: an ideal example of the classical treatment of the object is the school of Dutch still-life painting, in which variety and minuteness of detail are made subservient to a dominant quality that transforms all the materials of vision into a single visceral sensation: *luster,* the sheen of things, for example, is the real subject matter of all those compositions of oysters and glasses and wine and silver so familiar in Dutch painting. One might describe the whole effect of this art as an attempt to endow its object with an adjectival *skin,* so that the half-visual, half-substantial glaze we ingest from these pictures by a kind of sixth, coenesthetic sense is no longer a question of surface, no longer "superficial." As if the painter had succeeded in furnishing the object with some warm name that dizzily seizes us, clings to us, and implicates us in its continuity until we perceive the homogeneous texture of a new ideal substance woven from the superlative qualities of all possible matter. This, too, is the secret of Baudelaire's admirable rhetoric, in which each name, summoned from the most discrepant orders of being, surrenders its tribute of ideal sensation to a universal perception of *radiant* matter ("*Mais les bijoux perdus de*

l'antique Palmyre, les métaux inconnus, les perles de la mer," etc.[4]).

In opposition to this concept, Robbe-Grillet's description of an object finds its analogies with modern painting (in its broadest acceptation), for the latter has abandoned the qualification of space by substance in favor of a simultaneous "reading" of the planes and perspectives of its subject, thereby restoring the object to its "essential bareness." Robbe-Grillet destroys the object's dominion-by-substance because it would frustrate his major intention, which is to insert the object in a dialectic of space. Not that this space is Euclidean—the extreme care Robbe-Grillet takes to situate the object in a proliferation of perspectives, to find within the elasticity of our field of vision a singularly fragile point of resistance, has nothing whatever to do with the classic concern to establish the dimensions and depths of academic perspective.

It will be recalled that according to the classical concept of description, a picture is always a motionless spectacle, a *site* frozen into eternity: the spectator (or the reader) has accorded the painter power of attorney to circulate around the object, to explore with his delegated eyes its shadows and—to use Poussin's word—its "prospect," thereby effecting the simultaneity of all possible approaches, since every spectator after the painter himself must look at the picture with the painter's eyes. This is the source of the imaginary supremacy of the spectator's "situation" in classical painting (so clearly expressed by the very nomenclature of its orientations: "on the right . . . to the left . . . in the foreground . . . in the background . . ."). The descriptive technique of modern painting, however, nails the *spectator* to a single place and releases the *spectacle* upon him, adjusting it to several angles of vision at once. It has often been remarked that modern canvases seem to leap from the wall, rushing out at the spectator, over-

[4] But the lost jewels of ancient Palmyra, the unknown metals, the pearls of the sea. . . .

whelming him by their aggressive pre-emption of space: the painting is no longer a prospect, then, but a "project." And this is precisely the effect of Robbe-Grillet's descriptions. They set themselves in motion spatially, the object is released without losing sight of its earlier positions, and somehow, for a moment, exists in depth without ceasing to be merely flat. There is recognizably the same revolution at work here that the cinema has effected upon the visual reflexes.

In *Les Gommes*, in fact, Robbe-Grillet has had the coquetry to include one scene in which a man's relation to this new space is described in an exemplary fashion. Bona is sitting in the middle of a vast, empty room, and he describes the field of space before his eyes: it includes the window, behind which he can make out a horizon of roofs and moving clouds, so that the spatial field actually moves past the motionless man; space becomes non-Euclidean while remaining just as it was. In this little scene, furthermore, we have all the experimental conditions of cinematographic vision: the cubical room as the theater; its bareness as the darkness requisite to the emergence of the new, motionless vision; and the window, of course, as the screen itself, flat and yet accessible to every dimension of movement, even that of time.

Of course all this is not, ordinarily, vouchsafed to us *just like that*. Robbe-Grillet's camera is also something of a magic lantern, a real camera obscura. For example, consider the persistence with which this author arranges the elements of his picture according to the classic orientation of the imaginary spectator. Like any traditional scenario-writer, he throws in a good many *on the right's* and *to the left's*, whose propulsive rôle in academic composition we have just examined. But in the case of Robbe-Grillet, such purely adverbial terms indicate nothing at all: linguistically, of course, they are gestural commands and have no more dimension than a cybernetic message. It has, perhaps, been one of the grand illusions of classical rhetoric to believe that a scene's verbal orientation has any

power of suggestion or representation whatever. In literature, beyond a certain crudely operative procedure (in the theater), these notions are completely interchangeable and, of course, quite useless, having no other excuse for existing except to justify the spectator's ideal mobility.

If Robbe-Grillet chooses, with all the deliberation of a good craftsman, to employ such devices, it is in the cause of mockery, in behalf of the destruction of classical space and the dispersion of concrete substance, the high-pressure volatilization of a super-saturated universe, an overconstructed space. His multiplication of details, his obsession with topography, his entire demonstrative apparatus actually tend to destroy the object's unity by giving it an exaggeratedly precise location in space, by drowning it in a deluge of outlines, coordinates, and orientations, by the eventual abuse of perspective—still under its academic denominations—by exploding the traditional notion of space and substituting for it a new space, provided, as we shall soon see, with a new depth and dimension in time.

Robbe-Grillet's descriptive strategy, then, can be summarized as follows: destroy Baudelaire by an absurd appeal to Lamartine, and at the same time, of course, destroy Lamartine (the comparison is not entirely gratuitous, if you agree that our literary "sensibility" is wholly adjusted by ancestral reflexes to a "Lamartinian" vision of space). Robbe-Grillet's analyses, minute and patient enough to be taken for imitations of Flaubert or Balzac, unceasingly corrode the object by their very precision, attack the adjectival skin classical art deposits on a picture to induce in its spectator the euphoria of a restored unity. The classic object fatally secretes its adjective (the Dutch *luster*, the Racinian *désert*, Baudelaire's *radiant* substance), and it is just such a fatality which Robbe-Grillet is hunting down, subjecting it to the anticoagulating effects of his own description. At any cost this skin, this carapace must be destroyed, the object must be kept "open" to the

circulation of its new dimension: Time.

To understand the temporal nature of the characteristic Robbe-Grillet object, we must observe the mutations he compels it to undergo, and here again, confront the revolutionary nature of his endeavors with the norm of classical description. The latter, of course, has had its means of subjecting objects to the forces of breakdown and collapse. But always in such a way that the object, so firmly settled within its space or its substance, merely encountered a sort of Ulterior Necessity that fell upon it from the Empyrean. The classical concept of time has no other countenance than that of the Destroyer of perfection (Chronos with his scythe). For Balzac, for Flaubert, for Baudelaire, for Proust himself (the mode merely inverted), the object is the hero of a melodrama, decaying, disappearing, or rediscovering its final glory, ultimately participating in a real eschatology of matter. One might say the classical object is nothing but the archetype of its own ruin, forever opposing its spatial essence to the action of an ulterior (and therefore exterior) Time which operates as a destiny, not as an internal dimension.

The classical concept of time thus inevitably encounters the classical object as its catastrophe or its deliquescence. The mutability Robbe-Grillet accords his objects is of an altogether different kind—a mutability of which the *process* is invisible: an object, described for the first time at a certain moment in the novel's progress, reappears later on, but with a barely perceptible difference. It is a difference of a situational or spatial order—what was on the right, for example, is now on the left. Time dislocates space, arranging the object like a series of slices that almost completely cover one another: and it is this spatial "almost" which contains the temporal dimension of Robbe-Grillet's object. It is the kind of variation crudely—but recognizably—indicated from frame to frame in old films, or from drawing to drawing in a comic strip.

Thus we can readily understand the profound motive that

has compelled this novelist to represent his object from what must always be a *point of view*. Sight is the only sense in which continuity is sustained by the addition of tiny but integral units: space can be constructed only from *completed* variations. Visually it is impossible for a man to participate in the *internal process* of dilapidation—no matter how fine you slice the units of decay, he cannot see in them anything but their effects. The visual dispensation of the object is the only one that can include within it a *forgotten* time, perceived by its effects rather than by its duration, and hence deprived of its pathos.

The whole endeavor of Robbe-Grillet has been to locate his object in a space provided in advance with these points of mutation, so that it seems merely out of joint rather than actually in the process of decay. The neon sign on the Gare Montparnasse would be a good object for Robbe-Grillet because its presented complexity of structure is entirely visual in effect, composed of a certain number of *sites* which have no other freedom but to annihilate themselves or change places. On the other hand, it is easy to conceive of things that would be bad objects for Robbe-Grillet: a lump of sugar dipped in water and gradually melting down (furnishing geographers their image of erosion)—here the continuity of decay would be inacceptable to Robbe-Grillet's intentions, since it restores a sense of the menace of time, the contagion of matter. On the contrary, Robbe-Grillet's objects never decay: they mystify or they disappear; time is never a corruption or even a catastrophe, but merely a change of place, a hideout for data.

The point is most explicitly made in his "Three Reflected Visions," where Robbe-Grillet uses the phenomenon of mirror reflection to account for this kind of reak in the temporal circuit: imagine the motionless changes of orientation produced by a mirror-image as being somehow decomposed and distributed throughout a certain period of time and you have the art of Alain Robbe-Grillet. But of course the virtual in-

sertion of time into the vision of the object is an ambiguous matter: Robbe-Grillet's objects may have a temporal dimension, yet the concept of time in which they exist is scarcely a classical one—it is an unwonted sort of time, a time *for nothing*. If there is a sense in which Robbe-Grillet has restored time to his object, it would be nearer the truth to say that the kind of time he has restored is one in which an affirmative can be expressed only by a negative, a positive only by its contrary. Or better still, if more paradoxically, one might say that Robbe-Grillet has given his objects movement without that movement having taken place in time.

I have no intention of detailing the plot of *Les Gommes* (Robbe-Grillet's first novel) here, but I cannot resist pointing out that this book is the story of a circular sense of time which somehow cancels itself out after having led its men and its objects along an itinerary at the end of which they find themselves *almost the same* as when they started. Everything happens as if the whole story were reflected in a mirror which sets what is actually on the right on the apparent left, and conversely, so that the "plot" development is nothing more than a mirror-image spaced out over a period of twenty-four hours. For the knitting-together of the parts to become truly significant, of course, the point of departure must be unusual, even sensational. Hence the detective-story nature of this novel in which the "almost-the-same" qualities of the *mirror-image* consist in the corpse's change of identity.

Thus even the plot of *Les Gommes* enlarges this same ovoid (or overlooked) time that Robbe-Grillet has introduced among his objects. One might call it a mirror time—speculary time. The development is even more flagrant, of course, in *Le Chemin de Retour*, in which sidereal time (in this case, the rhythm of the tide), by changing the shape of the land surrounding a tidal basin, represents the very gesture that causes the reflected object to succeed the direct one, welding them together where they meet. The tide modifies the hiker's field

of vision as a mirror-image reverses the orientation of space —right becoming left, etc. Except that while the tide is rising, the hiker is on an offshore island, absent and unaware of the *duration* of the change: time *takes place* between parentheses. This intermittent withdrawal is the definitive and central act of Robbe-Grillet's experiment: to keep man from participating in or even witnessing the *fabrication* or the *becoming* of objects, and ultimately to exile the world to the life of its own surface.

His endeavor is decisive to the degree that it has affected the one literary "substance" which still enjoys the privileges of the classic point of view: the object. Not that other contemporary writers have not already concerned themselves with this very problem, some of them to good effect—we have Cayrol, we have Ponge as our most notable examples. But Robbe-Grillet's method is more extreme and more experimental, for he intends nothing less than a definitive interrogation of the object, a cross-examination from which all lyric impulses are rigorously excluded. To find a comparable strictness of procedure, one must turn to modern painting, where the rational destruction of the classical object may readily be discerned in all its anguish. Robbe-Grillet is important because he has attacked the last bastion of the traditional art of writing: the organization of literary space. His struggles parallel in significance those of surrealism with rationalism, of the avant-garde theater (Beckett, Ionesco, Adamov) with the conventions of the middle-class stage.

Yet his solutions owe nothing to these corresponding conflicts. Robbe-Grillet's destruction of the classical concept of space is neither oneiric nor irrational; it is based on an entirely new notion of the structure of matter and movement. The proper analogy is neither the Freudian universe, nor the Newtonian—we must face instead an intellectual complex derived from contemporary art and science—from the new physics and the cinema. This can be only roughly sketched

out, for here as in so many fields, we have no History of Forms. And since we lack as well an Esthetic of the Novel (by which I mean a history of its dispensation by its creators), we can only assign Robbe-Grillet a purely approximate place in the evolution of the form. Let us remember once again the traditional background against which his struggles are enacted: the novel was secularly instituted as an experiment in depth: social depth with Balzac and Zola, "psychological" with Flaubert, memorial with Proust—in every case the degree of man's or society's *inwardness* has determined the novel's field of action. The novelist's task has been, correspondingly, a labor of locating, quarrying, and excavating in the dark. This endoscopic function has been sustained by a concomitant myth of a human essence *at the bottom of things* (if he can only dig deep enough), and is now so natural to the form that it is tempting to define its exercise (reading *or* writing) as what skin-divers call a delirium of the depths.

Robbe-Grillet's purpose, like that of some of his contemporaries—Cayrol and Pinguet, for example, though in another direction—is to establish the novel on the surface: once you can set its inner nature, its "interiority," between parentheses, then objects in space, and the circulation of men among them, are promoted to the rank of subjects. The novel becomes man's direct experience of what surrounds him without his being able to shield himself with a psychology, a metaphysic, or a psychoanalytic method in his combat with the objective world he discovers. The novel is no longer a chthonian revelation, the book of hell, but of the earth—requiring that we no longer look at the world with the eyes of a confessor, of a doctor, or of God himself (all significant hypostases of the classical novelist), but with the eyes of a man walking in his city with no other horizon than the scene before him, no other power than that of his own eyes.

—Translated by Richard Howard

MICHAEL RUMAKER: Exit 3

The tractor-and-trailer rolled slowly off the shoulder and onto the turnpike, its red and yellow lights blinking. Jim stood a minute watching it go, then leaned down and picked up his suitcase and started walking briskly along the exit road, past the brightly lighted toll booths. He walked faster, tucking his scarf tightly about his throat as a cold wind sprang up. The exit road made a sweeping curve downward, joining the main highway a hundred yards on. He shifted his suitcase to the other hand and headed toward the highway.

As he walked along a Chevrolet convertible pulled up beside him, the motor idling. The horn blew. Jim turned, staring blindly into the headlights, and kept on going. The horn blew again, the car inching alongside him. The window on the driver's side rolled down and a head poked out.

"Hey, buddy. C'mere."

Jim hesitated a moment, then stopped and swung around, staring past the headlights and squinting his eyes to see better. He saw a sailor's white cap.

"C'mere a sec', buddy."

"Whatta you want?"

"C'mere, c'mere," the sailor persisted.

"I'm in a hurry," said Jim, swinging his suitcase to the other hand.

"It'll only take a minute."

Jim walked over to the car, stooping down and peering at several dark shapes in the back seat.

"Whatta you want?"

"Little favor," said the sailor, turning and smiling up at him, his arm slung loosely over the wheel. "Just a weensy favor," he grinned, crooking his thumb and forefinger small.

There was a commotion in the backseat. Two of the dark shapes were wrestling with a third. The third was shouting

and swearing at the other two.

"Lemme alone! Ouch, you bastards! I don' wanta go!"

"G'wan, get outa here," snarled one of the dark shapes. "You're pissy-eyed."

"C'mon, soldier, this is where you check out," snapped the other. "Exit 3, soldier."

"Don't call me no soldier, goddamn it, don't you call me no soldier!"

"So, okay, marine boy. Hop to it. Here's harbor, baby."

"Just don't soldier me, goddamn it. Just watch what you call me."

"Now's that the way to treat a buddy?"

"Okay, buddy, okay, babydoll."

"You see," grinned the sailor, reaching out and taking Jim by the arm, "He's a little looped."

"So what's that got to do with me?"

"Now look, mate," said the sailor. "He lives around here somewhere, see? Gotta get a bus to get home'n see his folks. You know."

"Look, sailor, I don't want the responsibility," Jim said, backing away. "I plan on getting home myself sometime tonight."

The sailor clutched his arm firmly. "Take him off our hands, will you? We're sick of him. He's been driving us nuts all the way up from Carolina. Come on, be a pal."

"You better take him to a busstop yourself."

"Buddy, we don't know nothing about this burg. We're heading for Boston."

The two were struggling with the drunken marine, trying to push him out of the car on the other side.

"I don't wanta go!" shouted the marine. "Lemme alone! Damn you, stop shoving me!"

"Out you go, Pluto." They each gave a violent shove and the marine flew out of the car, hitting the asphalt on his backside and folding up in a heap. He sat there stunned, his

head swinging from side to side.

"Hey, don't think you're gonna dump him on me!" Jim shouted.

"Toss out his bag," said the sailor.

"Alley-oop!" A leather suitcase was pitched out the back window and landed in the grass off the shoulder of the road.

"Get this crate rolling!"

"Boston, here we come!"

"Hey! Wait a minute!"

"Thanks, matie!" the sailor called, stepping on the gas. "You're an angel, baby!"

The car leapt forward, shooting around the wide curve bending out to the highway, the tires screaming.

Jim threw down his suitcase. He plonked his hands on his hips and spat furiously over his shoulder, as the tail-lights of the convertible disappeared in the traffic. He glared over at the dark heap a little distance away. It was swaying back and forth on the road.

"Who the hell are you?" he said, taking a step toward him.

"Buddies . . . yeah . . . some buddies . . ." came a voice out of the dark heap. Jim kicked his suitcase onto the shoulder and advanced toward the marine. The marine was moaning to himself, buried in the folds of his raincoat.

"Come on." Jim leaned down and grabbed him under the arms. "Before you get run over."

"Let 'em run me over."

"Can you stand up?" Jim slapped him on the cheek.

"You're goddamned right, buddy. I'm a f . . king american marine, remember that."

"Okay, stand up." Jim stepped back, watching him. The marine's head popped out of the collar of his raincoat and jerked from side to side. He looked up blearily at Jim in the darkness.

"You a doggie?" he said thickly.

"Get yourself up off the pavement."

"I'm a f . . king american marine," he growled. "I can take the cold."

"Come on, get up." He reached down and grabbed him under the arms. "You gotta walk, don't you?"

"I can walk."

Jim strained and grunted as he pulled him up. He managed to get the marine on his feet, then clasped both arms around his middle, supporting him.

"Can you stand alone?" he said.

"I'm a f . . king marine, I tell you."

"I know, I know. Can you stand alone?"

"I can stand alone."

Jim released his hold and took him by the arm. The marine swayed back and forth, his heavy boots scraping into the cinders as he struggled to get his footing.

"I'll never forget this, buddy. You're a peach, real peach."

He reached around, lifting his hand to touch Jim's cheek. The hand was crudely wrapped in a dirty handkerchief damp with blood. His knees buckled and he grinned, his eyes rolling loosely in his head, as he placed the hand on Jim's shoulder.

"What'd you do?" Jim said, trying to push the hand away.

"Window!" laughed the marine, his head flopping on his chest. "Doggie. Only he was on'a other side'a window . . . smashed . . ." His head flew back and he shouted, "Smashed the f . . king doggie!"

"Hey, cut that out. Look at yourself."

"I'm a slob. I don't give a shit."

"You can't go out on the street like this. Tuck in your shirt tail, fix your tie."

"Okay, buddy, you're pretty swell, buddy."

He began fumbling with the front ends of his shirt with his one good hand. The shirt was streaked with vomit down the front. He gave up trying to stuff the shirt-ends into his trousers, and the bad hand moved up, clawing dumbly over

his tie, smearing it with blood.

"I can't do it, buddy," he said, letting his hands fall heavily at his sides.

Jim squinted his eyes, then spit over his shoulder.

"Why them guys had to dump you on me I don't know."

He took the shirt-ends and pushed them down inside the trousers. He had soiled his hands from the vomit and he took out his handkerchief and wiped them, muttering to himself. Then he straightened the marine's tie and squared his cap straight on his head, pushing the mop of oily black hair under the stiff crown. He pulled the coat together and buttoned it.

"I'll never forget this, baby, I never will, honest." He tried to put his arm around Jim.

"Okay, okay. Just stand still."

The belt of the raincoat was twisted in back. Jim straightened it out, evening the lengths, then buckled it tightly in front. He held the marine at arms length, and looked him up and down.

"You're okay, buddy," said the marine, raising his hand and wiping his nose on the bloody handkerchief. "You're okay." He tried to touch Jim, but Jim pushed the hand away.

"You puked all over your tie."

"In Virginia it was. Vomited all over Virginia."

Jim pulled the lapels of the coat together and buttoned them, hiding the tie.

"We're going down there," he said, pointing to the highway. "See?"

"Okay, babydoll. Anything you say. Anything." The marine leaned over suddenly and kissed Jim clumsily on the mouth.

"I thought you were a marine," Jim said, looking around for the suitcases.

"I'm a red white and blue marine, f . . king american marine, true blue."

"Can you carry your bag?"

"I'm not helpless."

Jim steadied him, then walked over into the grass and picked up the leather suitcase belonging to the marine. When he got back he found him squatting on the asphalt.

"Whatta you trying to do?" He thrust the bag at him. "Let's get outta here. It's colder'n hell."

"Damned col'," muttered the marine.

Jim pulled him to his feet, slipping his arm into his and grasping it firmly. "Take this." He handed the marine his suitcase.

"Okay, baby. Anything. Anything you say."

Jim picked up his own suitcase and they started walking arm-in-arm, the marine stumbling clumsily, bumping at his side, down the exit road toward the highway.

"Tell me where you live."

"Nowhere." The marine tried to spit, but the saliva plopped on the shoulder of his coat and dribbled down the sleeve.

"Tell me where you live so I can put you on the right bus."

"My old man's gonna meet me exit 3."

"This is exit 3." Jim looked down toward the highway. "I don't see no car waiting."

"Call . . ."

"Call what?"

The marine stopped, pressing a hand to his forehead.

"Call . . . 2477 . . ."

"That your phone number?"

"Yeah."

Jim said the number to himself a couple of times.

"You're sure that's right?"

"I wouldn't kid you, baby."

"We'll find a telephone. I'll call him. How'd he know what time you'd get here?"

"He knows. Right now. Mr. Stark, my father, you ask for him. He knows me. Tell him I'm home . . ."

The marine dropped his suitcase and fell on his knees, clutching his stomach.

"What's the matter with you?" Jim cried, bending down beside him. "You feel sick?"

The marine was crying.

"Hey," Jim said, shaking his arm. "You gonna vomit? Make it snappy."

The marine didn't say anything.

"Come on, get the hell up outta there. We gotta get moving." He pulled him by the shoulders, but he wouldn't budge. He swayed back and forth, weeping.

"I smashed his face," he moaned. "Cut it all up. I showed him. Cut his face to ribbons. Ground his face in the broken glass. He won't make faces anymore. I ground his pretty face to bits."

"Quit talking like that. You'll get locked up."

"Let them lock me up. I fought in it. I know what it's all about."

A car came along the exit road, slowed down as it passed the two men, then stopped. A window slid down and a man's voice called, "Hey, soldier, can I give you a lift? Always glad to help our boys. Can only take one. How 'bout it, soldier?"

The marine straightened up slowly, then sprang forward and cupping his hands to his mouth, shouted, "You go stick that ride! You gook, I know you." He started running for the car, stumbling and sliding over the asphalt. Jim started after him.

"Gook! Gook! Kill 'em!"

"I don't take no drunk," the man snarled. "Soldier or no." He stepped on the gas and the car tore off, gathering speed as it raced toward the highway.

"You keep your junky car, you goddamned gook!" shouted the marine, standing in the middle of the road and shaking his fist at the retreating automobile. "I know you. Know

everything about you!"

He leaned forward, folding his arms over his chest and rocking back and forth, began to weep again.

"Whatta you want to do that for?" Jim said, hurrying up to him. "Guy wants to give you a ride and you act like that. Come on, here's your suitcase. Let's get to a telephone."

"Let him stick his car."

"Look, I'm getting pretty sick of you."

"Okay. Okay, babydoll. You're okay. You're a real buddy." He put his arm around Jim's shoulder.

"Will you do like I say?"

"Sure, baby, sure."

"You start acting funny again, I'm gonna leave you here cold and flat."

"Don't do that, buddy," the marine said, squeezing him tightly. "I'll do what you say, buddy. Honest I will."

"Okay. Grab your bag and come on."

They came down to the highway and walked into the blue light of the tall roadlamps standing at intervals along the way. Turning right they followed a narrow dirt path running alongside the concrete shoulder. The four-lane highway was crowded with traffic moving swiftly in either direction. The marine was having difficulty walking and he leaned heavily on Jim's shoulder.

"You walk too fast," he choked.

Jim slowed down, keeping his eye on the neon signs of some gas stations farther up the highway.

"Look," he said, "when we get to one of them stations I want you to behave yourself. You got me? No blabbing about gooks or anything. You understand? Clean up your mouth. People don't like to hear that kinda talk. This isn't the army."

"Goddamn it, I ain't in the army. I ain't no goddamned doggie."

"Okay. You just hold yourself up and talk straight. You hear?"

"I hear you, baby," said the marine, coming to a dead

halt under a roadlamp. "I hear you talking all the time."

"Now what?" said Jim, dropping his suitcase.

The marine lifted both hands, holding them close to his face, clenching and unclenching his fists. He winced, staring at the bloody hand as though he hadn't seen it before.

"I did this, buddy. I killed a doggie in Virginia. Killed 'im through a window," he said, slowly uncoiling the sticky fingers. The blood-clotted handkerchief slipped to the ground, was picked up by the wind and carried off in the darkness.

"Now look what you done," Jim said.

The marine sighed and leaned heavily on Jim's shoulder.

"I ain't feeling no pain," he said, gruffly, trying to stuff the hand in his pocket. "It don't hurt me."

"It's damned near cut through to the bone. Here." Jim pulled his handkerchief from his pocket and took the hand.

"Aw, buddy, I don't wanta do that. That's your clean handkerchief."

"It's not so clean." Jim took the hand and wrapped the handkerchief around it to form a crude tourniquet.

"That's mighty white of you, buddy. Mighty white."

"Yeah, now come on. We gotta get moving."

A little farther on, in a flat open area on the other side of the highway, stood a glowing telephone booth, red white and blue plastic and glassed in on three sides.

Jim jerked the marine by the arm. They crossed the highway, Jim keeping a tight hold on the marine as they dodged their way through the traffic. When they got to the booth, Jim made the marine sit down on the suitcase.

"Stay put now. What was the number again?"

"What?"

"Your phone number. I wanta call your father."

"I forget."

"Come on, don't get funny."

"Okay, buddy, I wouldn't get funny with you."

"What is it then?"

"Wait a minute . . ." He shut his eyes tight and after a moment said slowly, "2477."

"Okay. Now you just sit here."

"Buddy . . ." The marine tried to get up.

"Stay there for godssakes." Jim made him sit down again.

"Buddy . . ."

"What?"

"If he ain't there, try the Columbia Cafe. That's . . ." He paused a moment, shutting his eyes again. "I know it. A minute. I know it. Yeah . . . 8191. You call there he ain't home, huh, buddy?"

"Okay. Don't move. I'll be out in a minute."

Jim stepped into the booth, pulling the door closed after him. He fumbled in his pocket for some change, found a dime, and dropped it in the slot. He dialed the first number. The phone rang again and again, one long, one short. There was no answer. He swung around to check how the marine was and saw only the leather suitcase overturned outside the booth. He looked quickly around the vacant lot to one side, then spotted him staggering out toward the middle of the highway in the midst of the traffic. The hand wrapped in the handkerchief was lifted, a bent cigaret hung loosely between his lips. He was pointing to the cigaret and motioning to a Negro sailor who stood on the opposite side of the highway, thumbing a ride. Jim flew out of the booth and ran over to the edge of the highway.

"Hey, get back here!" he shouted.

"Buddy, you got a match? Yo, dinge!" the marine was calling in a slurred voice over the roar of the traffic. "Yo, buddy-dinge," he howled. He lurched toward the Negro, pointing to the cigaret.

"Hey, sailor!" Jim shouted.

The Negro was waving his arms, motioning the marine back. There was a screech of brakes as a car bore down on him. The driver swerved to one side, narrowly missing him. He

slowed down long enough to shout out a few curses, then sped on.

"Hey, sailor, stop that guy, will you?" Jim started across the highway. "He's drunk!"

The Negro lifted his bag and dodging a tractor-and-trailer, ran out to meet the marine. Both Jim and the Negro got to the marine at the same time and each took an arm and led him back across the highway.

"Wanta match," said the marine, as soon as they got to the telephone booth.

"I gotta match. Whyn't you ask me?"

"You was busy."

"You coulda got killed."

"Yeah, man, you shouldn't go bumming lights on a busy street the shape you're in." The Negro pulled a lighter from the pocket of his peajacket and cupped the flame, holding it out to the marine.

"Much obliged, buddy," he said, puffing hard on the cigaret. He swung away and slumped against the booth. "Mighty fine, dinge, mighty fine of you."

"Look, sailor, you stay here a minute and keep an eye on him, will you? I'm trying to call his folks."

"I wanta get to New York before midnight," said the sailor.

"This'll only take a minute, pal. Honest."

"Hey, dinge, come on over here and talk to me," growled the marine. "Pretty nice for a boogie. Saved my life. Give the dinge the purple ticker."

"Don't you call me that."

"Lay off that stuff," Jim said to the marine. "He saved your life. He gave you a light, didn't he?"

"A spade's a spade. He's a good old spade." The marine slid down the booth and slumped in a sitting position at the base of it.

"Look, will you stay here a minute?" Jim said, taking the sailor by the arm.

"Boy, I told you I wanta get to New York. I ain't got no

time to mess around."

"Just a minute, huh?"

The Negro glanced down at the marine, who sat propped against the plate-glass wall of the booth, his face buried in the lapels of his raincoat.

"Well, okay," he said slowly. "But I don't mean to stay around here much longer. I probably missed a dozen rides by now. You hurry up and make that call."

"That's swell of you," Jim said. He stepped into the booth, sliding the door to after him. He dialed the number of the Columbia Cafe and there was a long wait as the phone buzzed on and off at the other end. He kept glancing down to where the marine sat slouched against the glass, his knees drawn up to his chin. The Negro stood off a little, his hands thrust deep in his pockets, his collar turned up. He was looking down the highway in the direction of New York, watching the cars speed by.

Finally the receiver clicked at the other end, there was a hum of voices, and the straggly tail-end of a blues being sung in a drunken wavering voice.

"Hello, hello, Columbia Cafe?"

A shrill giggle hurt his ear.

"That's right, kiddo. Whadda you want?"

It was a woman's voice.

"Is Mr. Stark there? I gotta talk to Mr. Stark right away."

"Who?"

"Stark—Mr. Stark—his son—"

"How do you spell that, kiddo?"

"S-t-a-r-k, I guess."

"You *guess*? What you want him for? Hey, Harry, make mine VO with soda, if you're buying!"

"Listen, is he there?"

"Who?"

"Mr. Stark."

"Say, what's your name?"

"What's that got to do with it? All I wanta know is if Mr. Stark's there. I gotta talk to him about something important. His son . . ."

"Geez, I sure wisht they had television on phones. You got an awful cute voice."

"Look . . ."

There was a rapping at the door of the booth. Jim glanced up and saw the Negro motioning toward his watch. Jim nodded quickly and held up his finger. "A minute . . . just one minute."

"Who's that knocking? Who're you talking to, cutie? Ouch, Harry, don't get so fresh! Hello . . ."

"Look, this is awful urgent. Could you please get me Mr. Stark. His son is drunk . . ."

"His son? Who's his son? I don't know his son. What's *your* name?"

"Look, that don't matter. I gotta talk to Mr. Stark 'cause his son's laying outside here stone drunk and I want Mr. Stark to come and pick him up."

"What's wrong with being stoney drunk, I'd like to know? You should be happy. Whatta you say me and you get stoney drunk, huh?" She tittered. "Where do you live?"

"Look, lady, all I want is a little simple information. Now don't get funny with me . . ."

"Who's getting funny? I like that."

"Is Mr. Stark there?"

"Who?"

"Oh, goddamn it to hell!"

"Look, kiddo, don't think you can use that kind of language with me, just 'cause I can't see you. I ain't truck."

The Negro started rapping on the door again.

"Just a minute! Just a minute, please!"

The Negro shook his head firmly and picking up his canvas bag started walking quickly toward the highway.

"Look, lady!" Jim blurted in the mouthpiece.

"You're hurting my ear! And quit calling me 'lady.'"

"I'm sorry. For the last time, is Mr. Stark there?"

"Who's that you're talking to?"

"Nobody."

"You talk to yourself?"

"Look, once and for all, is Mr. Stark there?"

"No, he ain't here."

"Jesus H. Christ!"

"Where're you calling from, kiddo? Whyn't you and your friend come on over? Hey, Harry, put my drink there . . . hey, kiddo . . . hello . . ."

Jim slammed down the receiver and shoving open the door, got up and jumped outside. He stood over the marine, hands on hips, scowling. He looked up and down the highway. The Negro was nowhere in sight. He leaned down and slapped the marine hard on top of the head.

"Wha . . .? Wha . . .?"

"Come on, you. Get up. We're getting out of here."

He pulled the marine to his feet.

"Wha . . . wha'sa matter?"

"Come on. We're gonna find a taxi station. I'm gonna put you in a cab and goodbye, baby. You're getting to be a real pain in the neck."

"Okay, buddy, anything," mumbled the marine. He yawned loudly and stared around stupidly with sleepy eyes, leaning on Jim. "Anything you say . . ."

Jim handed him his suitcase and flung one arm around him and they started walking toward a cluster of neon signs ahead.

"I couldn't get your folks."

"My folks?"

"Yeah, there wasn't any Mr. Stark at the Columbia Cafe."

"He must be somewhere else," the marine said thickly, as he stumbled along trying to keep up with Jim. "May be at the Silver Star."

"Well, I'm not going into that again. I had enough trouble

making that call as it was. I'm putting you in a taxi and sending you home."

"Okay, baby. I'll never forget this. Honest."

They crossed tree-lined streets, the trees slender and bare in winter, and on either side, stretching down the blocks, low bungalows with warm yellow lights glowing in the windows.

"Pretty. Awful pretty," croaked the marine, swinging his head from left to right. "Ain't it pretty, buddy?"

"Huh?"

"The lights . . . awful pretty."

"I don't see no taxi station," Jim said, looking around. "I thought there was a taxi station along here."

They walked on. In the next block they came to a drugstore facing on a sidestreet off the highway. The front of the store was one sheer wall of plate-glass window, adorned with flickering neon signs. Inside the cold white light of the place Jim spotted a row of telephone booths. A woman wearing steel-rimmed glasses stood behind a chrome counter, reading a newspaper. The store was empty.

"Look, I can get the number of a taxi from here," Jim said. He hesitated a moment. "Now look, you stay out here. Sit down on your suitcase and behave yourself. You understand me?"

"Sure, buddy, sure, I understand you."

Jim let go of the marine to take his suitcase from him and the marine fell back, bumping his full weight against the window. The woman inside glanced up sharply from her newspaper.

"Be careful," Jim said. "You don't wanta bust this thing. That lady's watching us."

"I'll bust it. Bust any window I see," growled the marine. "Bust the doggie."

"Pipe down," Jim said, looking quickly around. "People might hear you. Cop or something."

"Hate the cops."

"For pete's sake, don't start that again."

"Kill every one of the bastards. Grind 'em up."

"You just sit down here and forget all that."

He set the suitcase against the window and helped the marine to sit down on it. He put his own suitcase beside him.

"Now, keep an eye on this bag while I'm inside. I don't want anybody stealing it."

"Nobody'll steal it, baby doll. I'll kill them."

"Okay. Now you just sit there and be quiet. I'll be back in a minute."

"Where you going, buddy?"

"I'm gonna call a taxi for you."

Jim stared at him.

"Didn't you call my father, buddy? I told you Columbia Cafe. He's gonna meet me exit 3."

"Look, he wasn't there. I told you already."

"You didn't tell me nothing. You getting funny with me, buddy?"

"I'm not getting funny with you. For christsake, I . . ."

"Just don't you get funny, that's all. Nobody gets funny with me. I'm a f . . king american marine. Remember that. I don't take no shit from nobody. Smashed a window."

His head fell forward. The woman behind the counter had taken off her steel-rimmed glasses and was staring intently at the two outside.

"Look, I'm trying to help you out," Jim said. "I won't do you dirt. Now sit here and be quiet. I'm gonna get you a taxi so you can get home."

"Okay, baby. You're okay, baby." The marine began roughly fondling him. "I can trust you, baby, I know that."

"Well, okay. Just sit here now til I get back."

"Right you are, I got you, baby doll."

Jim straightened up, adjusting his scarf and smoothing his hair with one gloved hand. He glanced a moment at the woman behind the counter, then strode over to the full-length

glass door, pushed it open and went inside. He walked straight up to the woman.

"I need a taxi right away. I . . ."

"Auburn 7-0801," she said crisply, her eyes trained on the marine sitting outside, his back against the window.

"Thank you."

He stepped into one of the booths and dialed the number. The phone on the other end buzzed once, there was a click, and a thick voice said, "Hummingbird cab."

"Listen, I want a taxi . . ."

"Where are you?"

"Where am I? I don't know. Wait a minute. I'll find out."

He pushed open the door and called, "Lady, hey, lady, what address is this?"

"Black Horse Pike, Burr Drugs," she said, not looking at him, her eyes still riveted outside the window. "He knows."

"Burr Drugs," Jim said, swinging back to the mouthpiece. "Black Horse . . ."

"I got you. Be there in a couple of minutes."

The phone clicked at the other end. Jim stared at the receiver a moment, then slowly put it back on the hook. As he was stepping out of the booth, there was a shrill scream from the woman at the counter, and turning toward the window Jim saw the marine standing facing them, his face twisted, his eyes bulging from his head, and the bloody hand lifted high over his head, clenched in a fist.

"Stop him! For godssake, stop him!" screamed the woman, her fingers pressed at her temples. "I knew he'd do something! I knew it!"

"Hey, don't do that!" Jim shouted, running for the door. "Hey!"

The marine walloped the window with his fist. The glass shuddered under the impact. He threw back his arm and pounded the window a second time, leaving a smear of blood where his fist struck.

The woman covered her mouth with her hand and hurried out the door after Jim.

"Stop him! What is he nuts?" she cried, once outside.

Jim grabbed hold of the marine and pulled him away from the window.

"What're you trying to do? You said you wouldn't do anything. Look at you!"

"Smash the f . . king window! Kill the bastards!" choked the marine, flailing his arms about high in the air. He was panting for breath and trembling, his face flushed red. Jim held him tightly in his arms.

"Are you crazy or something? Drop them arms! Drop them! Now look what you done to your hand. You got it bleeding all over again. Come on now. Calm yourself."

The marine let his arms fall heavily at his sides. He began to cry, his mouth flapping open and shut as he gulped for air; a string of saliva swung from his chin. He pressed his fists into his eyes.

"Smash it!" he gasped. "Smash it all!"

"Settle down," Jim coaxed. "You're getting yourself all worked up over nothing."

"You get him outa here," snapped the woman, polishing her glasses on one corner of her apron. "I'll call the police.

"Don't do that, lady. He's had a little to drink . . ." He lifted his hand awkwardly to her. "You know."

"A little, huh? Why he's drunk as a hoot-owl. Must have the dt's to carry on like that. He busts that window, I'll make plenty trouble for him. And I'll hold you responsible." She snapped the glasses back on her nose. "Look at the mess he made," she said, pointing to the blood stain. "I just had them windows cleaned."

"He won't bust your window, lady."

"Well, you get him away from there and hold on to him. That's not no ordinary cheap glass," she said, rapping the window with her knuckles. "He busts that it'll cost him a

pretty penny."

"He won't bust it, lady."

"Well, I'm telling you."

"Okay, lady, goodnight, lady."

"You hold him over by the curb. He comes close to this window again, I'm calling the cops, and I don't mean maybe."

"I got you, lady. Come on, boy. Come over here with me. Do like I say."

The marine would not move, but kept his fists knuckled over his eyes, his body shaking with dry sobs.

"What's he blubbering about? He got the crying-jags?"

"I guess so," said Jim, leading the marine away. "He don't feel so good."

"I should think not, all he's had to drink."

She stared at the marine, pursing her lips and folding her arms beneath her apron. Jim led the marine to the curb and held him there with both arms around him.

"You just better keep an eye on him, I'm telling you," she said, scratching her arms under the apron.

"I will, lady."

She looked quickly up and down the street then turned and pushing open the glass door went back into the store.

"Now you see what can happen? You see? She coulda had you pinched."

"Don't care," choked the marine.

"You're acting like a baby. Tough guy, huh?"

"Bust her window," he said, rubbing his eyes. "Grind her face in it. Show her."

"Just behave yourself."

"Cut off her tits with the broken glass."

"Stop that."

"Dried up whore. Let me go talk to her," he muttered, struggling to break free.

"You stay right here. Haven't you caused enough trouble? The taxi'll be here in a minute. And, listen, don't you give

the cabbie no trouble. You lay back and get some shuteye riding home. Don't you bother the taxi driver."

"I'll kill him, cut off her balls."

"Lean over and strangle him when you're skimming eighty an hour down Black Horse Pike," Jim whispered hoarsely in his face. "Go on and do that. I'm tired of the whole monkey-business."

"I'll strangle him."

Three soldiers appeared at the corner, walking arm-in-arm, laughing and talking loudly. They stopped in front of the drugstore and then turned and stared at each other in amazement.

"This here ain't no bar," said one.

"I be damned if I want an ice cream soda," said another, and he burst out laughing.

"Fi-yoo!" wheezed the third. "All this shoe leather burnt for nothing, and're my dogs in heat!"

They roared with laughter. The marine cocked his head up and glared over at them.

"Hey!" he shouted.

The three soldiers looked over to where Jim and the marine were standing.

"You an MP?" shouted the soldier in the middle, squinting and bending forward, hanging loosely on the arms of the other two.

"Come over here," snarled the marine.

"Who you shouting orders at, duckboy?" said one of the soldiers. "This ain't the army out here, buddy."

"Don't 'buddy' me. I ain't no goddamned soldier," said the marine, working to pry himself loose from Jim's arms. "I'll show you who the hell I am."

"G'wan, you guys, get going," Jim called. "He don't know what he's saying. He's drunk."

"I ain't so goddamned drunk I can't take care of three doggies," snapped the marine, freeing one arm and thrusting Jim

aside. He stood with his legs apart, his hands held loosely on his hips, glowering at the soldiers.

"C'mere, doggies."

"Get *him*!" said one of the soldiers.

The three laughed, nudging each other.

"Go on, you guys," Jim said. "He don't know what he's saying."

"No marine scares us."

"Here's one'll make you shit razor blades," said the marine, taking a step forward.

"Come and try it."

Jim came up to the marine and took him by the arm. "Look, that taxi's gonna be here in a minute. You don't wanta make no trouble."

"Who's making trouble? Keep the hell outa my way." He stiff-armed Jim square in the chest and Jim pitched back, landing heavily in the gutter, the wind knocked out of him.

"Nobody kills a f . . king american marine."

The woman in the store walked quickly to one of the telephone booths. She stepped inside, pulling the door shut after her.

"Come on, you guys," said one of the soldiers, reeling toward the marine. "Let's make short work of this bird."

The three of them advanced abreast, staggering a little, crouching low, their knees bent, their arms crooked, and hands clenched into fists. The marine scraped his feet into the grass plot, digging in for footing. He stooped low, thrusting his head out, his lips curled in a snarl, the white hard teeth clamped tight together, his eyes glistening, narrowed to slits.

"Come on, you doggie bastards, come to papa, come on, you f . . king doggies, to papa."

He swayed his outthrust arms from side to side and crouched lower. One of the soldiers let out an earsplitting rebel yell and the three pounced on the marine, shouting and snarling, kicking him, beating at him with their fists. The

marine's one good hand shot up, swiping wildly at the air. There was the hard smack of knuckles on flesh and breathless choked curses. The marine's knees began to buckle, his one hand disappeared in the tangle of swiftly flying arms and legs. The soldiers clung to him and the marine began to topple, lurching from side to side, and, groaning, sank to the ground beneath the weight of the men. He lay moaning. There was the sound of hoarse heavy breathing.

Jim picked up his suitcase and started walking down the dark street, kicking at the tufts of dead grass in the cracks of the pavement.

The woman had come out of the telephone booth and was standing behind the counter, staring at the men.

The soldiers untangled themselves, piling off the marine, and started hopping around from one foot to the other, laughing loudly, and snorting clouds of steam from their mouths.

"That settles the big-mouthed duckboy!" hooted one, panting for breath.

"Big shot marine! Ho, boy!"

They helped brush each other off, then each started setting his clothes right. One poked around in the grass, hunting for their caps.

The marine lay stretched full length on the grass plot, one arm thrust over his chest, the other pinned beneath him. His mouth was half open, a strangling noise came up from the depths of his throat.

"Come on, men. Let's go find that bar," said one.

"Celebrate the victory!" shouted another.

"Fi-yoo! I hope to Christ this ain't a dry town. No-o-o-o Sahara Mary! Yipeeeeee!"

They took arms and walked away, laughing and shouting, glancing back now and then to boo the prostrate figure of the marine until they rounded the corner and were gone.

At the end of the street Jim stopped beneath a streetlamp, set down his suitcase, and looked back. He could see the

marine stretched out a little distance from the drugstore, and beyond that the headlights of the cars hurtling back and forth on the highway. He coughed up some phlegm in his throat, rolled it around on his tongue, then spit it over his shoulder into the gutter. He pulled up the collar of his overcoat and, rubbing his gloved hands together, looked again toward the other end of the street.

The woman in the drugstore came out, carrying a sponge in one hand and a little tin of water in the other. She glanced sharply at the marine, then turned to the plate-glass window. Dipping the sponge in the water, she began rubbing at the stain of blood on the glass. She rubbed briskly, pausing once to dip the sponge again in the water and wring it out, then polished the glass clean with a corner of her apron. She emptied the tin of water in the alley alongside the building and came back and stood in front of the window, one hand on her hip, giving a careful inspection of the glass. She walked over to one corner and rubbed at it with her sponge, then stepped back a pace to survey what she had done. Satisfied, she turned and stood regarding the marine for a moment. She went to him in quick short steps and bent over him, reaching one hand out from beneath her apron and slapping his cheek again and again. The low wail of a siren sounded somewhere along the highway. The woman snapped up her head and listened, thrusting her hands under her apron and rubbing them briskly. She stared down at the marine a moment, then her eyes darted up and down the street. The approaching siren grew louder. She spotted Jim standing at the corner and her mouth began to move, to shape words, as though she were calling to him. Jim turned his back on her. He began to shiver and took out a pack of cigarets from the pocket of his coat and lit one. He stuck the cigaret between his lips and, picking up his suitcase, stepped off the curb and started over the street at a brisk pace, heading across town.

ANTONIN ARTAUD: No More Masterpieces

One of the reasons for the asphyxiating atmosphere in which we live without possible escape or remedy—and in which we all share, even the most revolutionary among us—is our respect for what has been written, formulated, or painted, what has been given form, as if all expression were not at last exhausted, were not at a point where things must break apart if they are to start anew and begin fresh.

We must have done with this idea of masterpieces reserved for a self-styled elite and not understood by the general public; the mind has no such restricted districts as those so often used for clandestine sexual encounters.

Masterpieces of the past are good for the past: they are not good for us. We have the right to say what has been said and even what has not been said in a way that belongs to us, a way that is immediate and direct, corresponding to present modes of feeling, and understandable to everyone.

It is idiotic to reproach the masses for having no sense of the sublime, when the sublime is confused with one or another of its formal manifestations, which are moreover always defunct manifestations. And if for example a contemporary public does not understand *Oedipus Rex*, I shall make bold to say that it is the fault of *Oedipus Rex* and not of the public.

In *Oedipus Rex* there is the theme of incest and the idea that nature mocks at morality and that there are certain unspecified powers at large which we would do well to beware of, call them *destiny* or anything you choose.

There is in addition the presence of a plague epidemic which is a physical incarnation of these powers. But the whole in a manner and language that have lost all touch with the rude and epileptic rhythm of our time. Sophocles speaks grandly perhaps, but in a style that is no longer timely. His language

is too refined for this age, it is as if he were speaking beside the point.

However, a public that shudders at train wrecks, that is familiar with earthquakes, plagues, revolutions, wars; that is sensitive to the disordered anguish of love, can be affected by all these grand notions and asks only to become aware of them, but on condition that it is addressed in its own language, and that its knowledge of these things does not come to it through adulterated trappings and speech that belong to extinct eras which will never live again.

Today as yesterday, the public is greedy for mystery: it asks only to become aware of the laws according to which destiny manifests itself, and to divine perhaps the secret of its apparitions.

Let us leave textual criticism to graduate students, formal criticism to esthetes, and recognize that what has been said is not still to be said; that an expression does not have the same value twice, does not live two lives; that all words, once spoken, are dead and function only at the moment when they are uttered, that a form, once it has served, cannot be used again and asks only to be replaced by another, and that the theater is the only place in the world where a gesture, once made, can never be made the same way twice.

If the public does not frequent our literary masterpieces, it is because those masterpieces are literary, that is to say, fixed; and fixed in forms that no longer respond to the needs of the time.

Far from blaming the public, we ought to blame the formal screen we interpose between ourselves and the public, and this new form of idolatry, the idolatry of fixed masterpieces which is one of the aspects of bourgeois conformism.

This conformism makes us confuse sublimity, ideas, and things with the forms they have taken in time and in our minds—in our snobbish, precious, aesthetic mentalities which

the public does not understand.

How pointless in such matters to accuse the public of bad taste because it relishes insanities, so long as the public is not shown a valid spectacle; and I defy anyone to show me *here* a spectacle valid—valid in the supreme sense of the theater—since the last great romantic melodramas, i.e., since a hundred years ago.

The public, which takes the false for the true, has the sense of the true and always responds to it when it is manifested. However it is not upon the stage that the true is to be sought nowadays, but in the street; and if the crowd in the street is offered an occasion to show its human dignity, it will always do so.

If people are out of the habit of going to the theater, if we have all finally come to think of theater as an inferior art, a means of popular distraction, and to use it as an outlet for our worst instincts, it is because we have learned too well what the theater has been, namely, falsehood and illusion. It is because we have been accustomed for four hundred years, that is since the Renaissance, to a purely descriptive and narrative theater—storytelling psychology; it is because every possible ingenuity has been exerted in bringing to life on the stage plausible but detached beings, with the spectacle on one side, the public on the other—and because the public is no longer shown anything but the mirror of itself.

Shakespeare himself is responsible for this aberration and decline, this disinterested idea of the theater which wishes a theatrical performance to leave the public intact, without setting off one image that will shake the organism to its foundations and leave an ineffaceable scar.

If, in Shakespeare, a man is sometimes preoccupied with what transcends him, it is always in order to determine the ultimate consequences of this preoccupation within him, i.e., psychology.

Psychology, which works relentlessly to reduce the un-

known to the known, to the quotidian and the ordinary, is the cause of the theater's abasement and its fearful loss of energy, which seems to me to have reached its lowest point. And I think both the theater and we ourselves have had enough of psychology.

I believe furthermore that we can all agree on this matter sufficiently so that there is no need to descend to the repugnant level of the modern and French theater to condemn the theater of psychology.

Stories about money, worry over money, social careerism, the pangs of love unspoiled by altruism, sexuality sugar-coated with an eroticism that has lost its mystery have nothing to do with the theater, even if they do belong to psychology. These torments, seductions, and lusts before which we are nothing but Peeping Toms gratifying our cravings, tend to go bad, and their rot turns to revolution: we must take this into account.

But this is not our most serious concern.

If Shakespeare and his imitators have gradually insinuated the idea of art for art's sake, with art on one side and life on the other, we can rest on this feeble and lazy idea only as long as the life outside endures. But there are too many signs that everything that used to sustain our lives no longer does so, that we are all mad, desperate, and sick. And I call for *us* to react.

This idea of a detached art, of poetry as a charm which exists only to distract our leisure, is a decadent idea and an unmistakable symptom of our power to castrate.

Our literary admiration for Rimbaud, Jarry, Lautréamont, and a few others, which has driven two men to suicide, but turned into café gossip for the rest, belongs to this idea of literary poetry, of detached art, of neutral spiritual activity which creates nothing and produces nothing; and I can bear witness that at the very moment when that kind of personal poetry which involves only the man who creates it and only

at the moment he creates it broke out in its most abusive fashion, the theater was scorned more than ever before by poets who have never had the sense of direct and concerted action, nor of efficacity, nor of danger.

We must get rid of our superstitious valuation of texts and *written* poetry. Written poetry is worth reading once, and then should be destroyed. Let the dead poets make way for others. Then we might even come to see that it is our veneration for what has already been created, however beautiful and valid it may be, that petrifies us, deadens our responses, and prevents us from making contact with that underlying power, call it thought-energy, the life force, the determinism of change, lunar menses, or anything you like. Beneath the poetry of the texts, there is the actual poetry, without form and without text. And just as the efficacity of masks in the magic practices of certain tribes is exhausted—and these masks are no longer good for anything except museums—so the poetic efficacity of a text is exhausted; yet the poetry and the efficacity of the theater are exhausted least quickly of all, since they permit the *action* of what is gesticulated and pronounced, and which is never made the same way twice.

It is a question of knowing what we want. If we are prepared for war, plague, famine, and slaughter we do not even need to say so, we have only to continue as we are; continue behaving like snobs, rushing en masse to hear such and such a singer, to see such and such an admirable performance which never transcends the realm of art (and even the Russian ballet at the height of its splendor never transcended the realm of art), to marvel at such and such an exhibition of painting in which exciting shapes explode here and there but at random and without any genuine consciousness of the forces they could rouse.

This empiricism, randomness, individualism, and anarchy must cease.

Enough of personal poems, benefitting those who create

them much more than those who read them.

Once and for all, enough of this closed, egoistic, and personal art.

Our spiritual anarchy and intellectual disorder is a function of the anarchy of everything else—or rather, everything else is a function of this anarchy.

I am not one of those who believe that civilization has to change in order for the theater to change; but I do believe that the theater, utilized in the highest and most difficult sense possible, has the power to influence the aspect and formation of things: and the encounter upon the stage of two passionate manifestations, two living centers, two nervous magnetisms is something as entire, true, even decisive, as, in life, the encounter of one epidermis with another in a timeless debauchery.

That is why I propose a theater of cruelty.—With this mania we all have for depreciating everything, as soon as I have said "cruelty," everybody will at once take it to mean "blood." But "*theater of cruelty*" means a theater difficult and cruel for myself first of all. And, on the level of performance, it is not the cruelty we can exercise upon each other by hacking at each other's bodies, carving up our personal anatomies, or, like Assyrian emperors, sending parcels of human ears, noses, or neatly detached nostrils through the mail, but the much more terrible and necessary cruelty which things can exercise against us. We are not free. And the sky can still fall on our heads. And the theater has been created to teach us that first of all.

Either we will be capable of returning by present-day means to this superior idea of poetry and poetry-through-theater which underlies the Myths told by the great ancient tragedians, capable once more of entertaining a religious idea of the theater (without meditation, useless contemplation, and vague dreams), capable of attaining awareness and a possession of certain dominant forces, of certain notions that control all

others, and (since ideas, when they are effective, carry their energy with them) capable of recovering within ourselves those energies which ultimately create order and increase the value of life, or else we might as well abandon ourselves now, without protest, and recognize that we are no longer good for anything but disorder, famine, blood, war, and epidemics.

Either we restore all the arts to a central attitude and necessity, finding an analogy between a gesture made in painting or the theater, and a gesture made by lava in a volcanic explosion, or we must stop painting, babbling, writing, or doing whatever it is we do.

I propose to bring back into the theater this elementary magical idea, taken up by modern psychoanalysis, which consists in effecting a patient's cure by making him assume the apparent and exterior attitudes of the desired condition.

I propose to renounce our empiricism of imagery, in which the unconscious furnishes images at random, and which the poet arranges at random too, calling them poetic and hence hermetic images, as if the kind of trance that poetry provides did not have its reverberations throughout the whole sensibility, in every nerve, and as if poetry were some vague force whose movements were invariable.

I propose to return through the theater to an idea of the physical knowledge of images and the means of inducing trances, as in Chinese medicine which knows, over the entire extent of the human anatomy, at what points to puncture in order to regulate the subtlest functions.

Those who have forgotten the communicative power and magical mimesis of a gesture, the theater can reinstruct, because a gesture carries its energy with it, and there are still human beings in the theater to manifest the force of the gesture made.

To create art is to deprive a gesture of its reverberation in the organism, whereas this reverberation, if the gesture is made in the conditions and with the force required, incites

the organism and, through it, the entire individuality, to take attitudes in harmony with the gesture.

The theater is the only place in the world, the last general means we still possess of directly affecting the organism and, in periods of neurosis and petty sensuality like the one in which we are immersed, of attacking this sensuality by physical means it cannot withstand.

If music affects snakes, it is not on account of the spiritual notions it offers them, but because snakes are long and coil their length upon the earth, because their bodies touch the earth at almost every point; and because the musical vibrations which are communicated to the earth affect them like a very subtle, very long massage; and I propose to treat the spectators like the snakecharmer's subjects and conduct them *by means of their organisms* to an apprehension of the subtlest notions.

At first by crude means, which will gradually be refined. These immediate crude means will hold their attention at the start.

That is why in the "theater of cruelty" the spectator is in the center and the spectacle surrounds him.

In this spectacle the sonorisation is constant: sounds, noises, cries are chosen first for their vibratory quality, then for what they represent.

Among these gradually refined means light is interposed in its turn. Light which is not created merely to add color or to brighten, and which brings its power, influence, suggestions with it. And the light of a green cavern does not sensually dispose the organism like the light of a windy day.

After sound and light there is action, and the dynamism of action: here the theater, far from copying life, puts itself whenever possible in communication with pure forces. And whether you accept or deny them, there is nevertheless a way of speaking which gives the name of "forces" to whatever brings to birth images of energy in the unconscious, and

gratuitous crime on the surface.

A violent and concentrated action is a kind of lyricism: it summons up supernatural images, a bloodstream of images, a bleeding spurt of images in the poet's head and in the spectator's as well.

Whatever the conflicts that haunt the mind of a given period, I defy any spectator to whom such violent scenes will have transferred their blood, who will have felt in himself the transit of a superior action, who will have seen the extraordinary and essential movements of his thought illuminated in extraordinary deeds—the violence and blood having been placed at the service of the violence of the thought—I defy that spectator to give himself up, once outside the theater, to ideas of war, riot, and blatant murder.

So expressed, this idea seems dangerous and sophomoric. It will be claimed that example breeds example, that if the attitude of cure induces cure, the attitude of murder will induce murder. Everything depends upon the manner and the purity with which the thing is done. There is a risk. But let it not be forgotten that though a theatrical gesture is violent, it is disinterested; and that the theater teaches precisely the uselessness of the action which, once done, is not to be done, and the superior use of the state unused by the action and which, *restored,* produces a purification.

I propose then a theater in which violent physical images crush and hypnotize the sensibility of the spectator seized by the theater as by a whirlwind of higher forces.

A theater which, abandoning psychology, recounts the extraordinary, stages natural conflicts, natural and subtle forces, and presents itself first of all as an exceptional power of redirection. A theater that induces trance, as the dances of Dervishes induce trance, and that addresses itself to the organism by precise instruments, by the same means as those of certain tribal music cures which we admire on records but are incapable of originating among ourselves.

There is a risk involved, but in the present circumstances I believe it is a risk worth running. I do not believe we have managed to revitalize the world we live in, and I do not believe it is worth the trouble of clinging to; but I do propose something to get us out of our marasmus, instead of continuing to complain about it, and about the boredom, inertia, and stupidity of everything.

—Translated by Mary Caroline Richards

21 February 1958

TO THE EDITORS:

Miss Peggy Guggenheim and Mr. Charles Pollock (oldest, not next oldest) brother of Jackson have written to me to correct certain errors in my note on Pollock in *Evergreen Review*, Vol. I, No. 3.

Miss Guggenheim writes: ". . . Pollock's first European one-man show was given . . . by me in Venice in 1950 at the Sala Napoleonica, which is part of the Correr Museum . . . opposite San Marco. . . . There were twenty-three of my paintings in it, from the end of July to the middle of August. Afterwards part of them were shown in Milan at the Gallery Naviglia in another one-man Pollock show. In 1953 a selection of [my Pollocks] . . . were lent by me to the Kunsthaus in Berne for their show."

Mr. Pollock writes: "The [Pollock] family left Cody in 1912, stopping first for some months in San Diego. . . . I am sure . . . we must have been [in Arizona] earlier than 1915. . . . Jack arrived in New York for the first time in the late summer of 1930 [not 1929]. Frank and I had driven west in a 1924 Buick. Jack decided to return with us."

I would appreciate the publication of this letter. Not that I wish to magnify the importance of every detail of Jackson Pollock's life, but I would not like to see errors of fact, no matter how unessential, become current because of their appearance in a note like mine, which was designed to give nothing but facts.

Yours faithfully,

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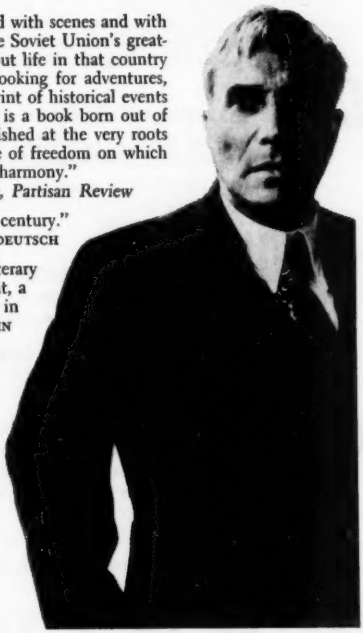

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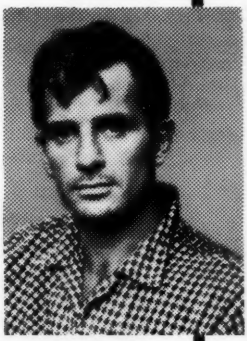

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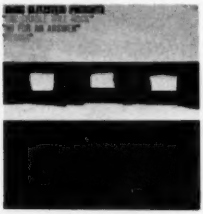

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